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OPINION METER

This week's poll:

Did you come up with a New Year's resolution this year?

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INSIDE

BUSINESS



AIG weighs taking part in a lawsuit against the government.

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FOCUS



A winter storm is magnifying the misery for thousands of Syrians.

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LIFE & STYLE



Lance Armstrong has agreed to a tell-all interview with Oprah Winfrey.

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Fund board regains quorum; ouster of trustee *ad litem* sought. **PAGE 3**

EB-5 visa center OK'd for NMI

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, right, is joined by Marianas EB-5 Regional Center LLC principal Robert "Bob" Jones, center, and triple J's Mike Sablan at the Office of the Governor's conference room during the announcement that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has approved the first EB-5 Regional Center in the CNMI.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

» Fitial says this will revolutionize CNMI economy

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has approved the first EB-5 Regional Center in the CNMI, a program where foreign nationals may invest in the center to obtain lawful permanent residency in the United States or "green cards."

See VISA on Page 4

Rota sees butane shortage; other goods running low

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
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REPORTER

The island of Rota is likely to experience a shortage in their supply of butane gas for cooking if the barge that delivers their supply does not arrive soon.

Several stores on the southern island have expressed concerns since butane gas is not allowed to be shipped by plane.

Esperanza Castro, accountant at Harvest Store, said in a phone interview yesterday that they ordered last November several palettes of butane gas cases and other commodities such

See ROTA on Page 4

SDLLC told that PPA deal is void

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Attorney General Joey P. San Nicolas has notified the Delaware-based Saipan Development LLC about Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's concurrence with his opinion that the \$190.8-million power purchase agreement with SDLLC is void and un-

enforceable.

"Saipan Development LLC is aware of the position of the government," said San Nicolas in an interview Tuesday.

San Nicolas informed SDLLC about Fitial's concurrence in a letter dated Jan. 4, 2013.

That was the same day *Saipan Tribune* published a story where press

secretary Angel A. Demapan stated that the Fitial administration anticipates the Office of the Attorney General to tell SDLLC about the governor's decision.

See SDLLC on Page 4



San Nicolas

NMC settles suit vs Fernandez

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The Northern Marianas College Board of Regents' lawsuit against former president Carmen Fernandez finally came to an end after the parties finalized a

settlement.

Board counsel Michael Dotts confirmed with the *Saipan Tribune* that the lawsuit was settled in September 2012.

Dotts disclosed that the board decided to end the litigation mainly due to the increasing legal costs and fees.



Fernandez

He declined to say how much was spent by the college in defending the case against Fernandez.

"I can say that
See NMC on Page 4



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Local

Kilili: Fitial's SOCA contains misstatements, distortions

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

CNMI Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan yesterday slammed Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's State of the Commonwealth Address, saying it contained misstatements and glaring distortions and was embarrassing.

"As the representative of the people of the Northern Mariana Islands in the federal government, I think it is important to set the record straight about a number of claims and misstatements in the governor's speech, regarding federal issues," said Sablan in a statement.

Fitial delivered his speech in front of the 17th House of Representatives on Tuesday on Capitol Hill.

In particular, Sablan took issue with Fitial's statement that he was "too optimistic that we would get enough help from the federal government to dig us out of this economic hole."

Sablan pointed out that when the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds began to be spent in the CNMI in 2009 and 2010, the economy went from minus 19 percent annual growth to positive 2 percent growth. Federal funds were largely responsible for that 21-percent turnaround in the is-

lands' Gross Domestic Product, he said.

Even today, Sablan said, Fitial is sitting on some \$45 million in federal Capital Improvement Projects funds, sitting on \$40 million in federal highway funds, and still has \$20 million in federal Recovery Act funds, all of which are unspent, four years after Congress gave him the money.

Third, Sablan said, federal funding and personnel are the ones keeping the Commonwealth Health Center open as CHC got \$25 million in Medicaid and Children Health's Insurance Program funding in the last year and a half—most of that from the new Obamacare law.

"We know that the huge increase I got in Congress for sewer and water funding—from under \$1 million per year to over \$34 million in the last four years—means there have been already days we had 24-hour water for almost all villages on Saipan," he said.

Sablan praised former Commonwealth Utilities Corp. executive director Abe Malae and the other hardworking people at CUC and at the Water Task Force who used that money to

get the water flowing.

"I also want to apologize, again, to the hardworking people at Environmental Protection Agency, who helped make this possible—the federal officials whom the governor called dumb, despite all they have done for us," he said.

In just the first five years of Fitial's administration since 2006, combined federal spending in the Commonwealth reached \$1.026 billion, Sablan said.

"Frankly, I think the governor embarrasses the Northern Mariana Islands when he complains that he is not getting enough help from federal taxpayers," he said.

Fitial isn't using the help he is getting and even returned federal money, said Sablan, citing the \$4.5 million in food stamp program funds that the governor did not spend between 2006 and 2010 and had to be returned to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Sablan said he won't speculate on the governor's motives for not putting all this federal help quickly to work for the people of the NMI. "But we have all seen the repeated pat-



Sablan



CLOTHING, TOY DONATION

Lt. Cmdr. Matthew R. Doubrava delivers donated clothes and toys to the children of Tinian's Head Start program on Dec. 5. The toys and clothes were donated by families from Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan. Doubrava is the Senior Medical Officer for Marine Aircraft Group 12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, III Marine Expeditionary Force.

LANCE CPL. J. GAGE KARWICK

Zoning Office attacker gets 6-month jail term

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
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REPORTER

Superior Court associate judge Joseph N. Camacho sentenced a businessman Tuesday to six months in prison for attacking a Saipan Zoning Office official that the defendant blamed for the collapse of his business.

William Fujihira Duenas was charged and found guilty of disturbing the peace. He was slapped with full maximum of six months, two months to be served day for day without the possibility of parole.

He was ordered to report to the Department of Corrections to start serving his sentence on Jan. 22 at 8am.

Police arrested Duenas on May 17 last year following an

incident at the Saipan Zoning Office when he attacked and threatened employees, including zoning official Therese Ogumoro.

During the hearing, the court found the testimony of Ogumoro and two other witnesses credible after they consistently identified the defendant, who appeared at the office angry and conducted himself in an unreasonable manner. Duenas, according to witnesses, also uttered words such as "Am Mr. Crazy," and "Here I am, arrest me!" The defendant had confessed he wanted to hurt someone.

According to Camacho, it is the right of every citizen to air their concerns and bring those grievances to their government

for redress through writing letters to their elected officials and by going to government offices during business hours and presenting their case in person.

However, Camacho said, no citizen in pursuit of having his personal issues addressed by government officials is free to punch tables, doors, glass windows, and "most definitely no person may pick up a chair and throw it at government employees."

"The right to freedom of speech ends when chairs are flying. Citizens do not have the right to threaten other citizens with violence and intimidation," stated Camacho, adding that once the defendant picked up and threw a chair, he crossed over the line from speech into

term of secret contracts with shady business associates and how those deals lead to delay. That is the sad State of the Commonwealth that the governor leaves us," he said.

The delegate said Fitial's speech about the upsurge in tourism from China in which he stated that "our ability to offer the visa waiver program places us in a very advantageous position" is another "glaring distortion."

"Apparently, Gov. Fitial still cannot bring himself to admit that the federal government manages immigration in the Northern Marianas now," he said.

Sablan said it was Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano who set up the parole system that is now allowing tens of thousands of Chinese tourists to visit the islands.

The delegate said Fitial never thanked the Office of Insular Affairs when he mentioned the HealthTech study at CHC.

The governor, Sablan said, never thanked the Office of Insular Affairs for paying for the National Renewable Energy Laboratory report identifying the possibility of geothermal resources on Saipan.

"He never said thank you to OIA for providing \$1.5 million to drill for those resources. Instead he complained that it is the federal government that has prevented quick action," he said.

Sablan noted that Fitial stated that is important to press the CNMI's cause in Congress for long-term unemployment benefits and full social security benefits.

Sablan said the people of the NMI are already eligible for full Social Security benefits because the Covenant provided such eligibility.

"Today, some 2,500 people of CNMI elders are collecting almost \$20 million in benefits each year just like Americans

everywhere," Sablan said, adding that if Fitial wants federal unemployment insurance benefits to be available, he needs to get the CNMI Legislature to set up a system and he needs to start collecting the required tax from everyone who gets a paycheck.

Sablan advised Fitial that instead of worrying about paying people to be unemployed, he should use the \$100 million in federal CIP, highway, and Recovery Act funds he has available to create jobs and

employ people.

Fitial's claim that he would create 1,000 jobs with a shipyard in the NMI also came under fire. Sablan said the Navy shipyard in Guam, where there is a harbor that can accommodate aircraft carriers, only employs 350 workers.

"I just have to ask: Governor, who do you think you are kidding? Because you certainly are not fooling the people of the Northern Mariana Islands," he said.

'So-called SOCA another political maneuver'

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

The so-called State of the Commonwealth Address is just another political maneuver of Gov. Benigno R. Fitial just to survive as there is no question that he is going to appear before the Senate for his impeachment, according to Senate President Paul A. Manglona (Ind-Rota).

In an interview shortly after Fitial delivered his SOCA before the House of Representatives on Tuesday, Manglona said the governor's use of the House of Representatives "is an example of how he continues to lie" to people.

"The speech that he gave today should be better given to the Senate impeachment trial hearing. Better it should be his opening speech," the senator said.

Manglona did not attend Fitial's SOCA, saying the Senate was not invited to a joint session.

The Senate president described Fitial as still in denial. "The people have seen already over the years that there's a lot of things that are going on as far as our government and his administration [is concerned]," he said.

Manglona said there are a lot of suffering in the Commonwealth because Fitial has been negligent and inattentive to the workings of the government through the various departments and agencies.

"It's very unfortunate. It's not that we're personal with him. This is really about our islands and our community, public health, public safety, the Retirement Fund. All these are real problems," he said.

Manglona said the CNMI needs real leadership, but that the governor had failed to provide that.

"You cannot continue to blame other people for your actions. You're the governor," he pointed out.

Manglona also questioned the governor's sincerity when

he apologized for his mistakes.

"This is not the first time he's done this. He's been doing this all along. And he thinks that he can do this one more time to survive. But the end has come," he said.

Manglona said Fitial should now accept that either he resigns or he has to come before the Senate for his impeachment hearing.

The senator said there is no question that the incoming 18th House is going to pass a resolution for his impeachment and this will subsequently go to the Senate.

Manglona described the SOCA as a sign of the governor's disrespect. "We've been asking for him to come to deliver his SOCA, but he never came. He never listened. He never wanted to deliver it," he said. "Now that he sees the end of the rope, he now wants to come and find a place to deliver a message, which basically was 'don't impeach me.'"

Former lieutenant governor Diego Benavente echoed Manglona, saying that Fitial's SOCA should have been reserved for the Senate court of conviction should the House pass the impeachment resolution.

Benavente said the governor's SOCA should be said before Senate members when he defends himself from impeachment.

Benavente pointed out that Fitial promised in 2005 that he was going to reduce the fuel surcharge from 15 cents per kilowatt-hour to 11 cents.

"As it turned out he didn't reduce that...he actually increased that over the years he's been in the office. Now he continues to mislead the people," Benavente said.

He said the governor lied about the power purchase agreement because the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. had advised him not to sign those documents.

"And he did!" Benavente said.

Fund board regains quorum; ouster of trustee *ad litem* sought

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
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REPORTER

Two appointees to the NMI Retirement Fund board of trustees received the Senate's nod following a confirmation hearing on Tuesday.

Jose T. Limes and Martin San Nicolas' confirmation brings the total number of board trustees to four, which re-establish its quorum to function.

The other trustees are Nacrina Barcinas and Adelina Roberto. Three slots remain vacant to complete the seven-member body.

With this development,

IT&E launches GSM network on Rota

IT&E, the Marianas Communications leader, is proud to announce a new era of coverage and connectivity in the Marianas with the launch of the most complete GSM network serving the island of Rota.

Engineers and technicians installed three GSM base stations to pre-existing CDMA sites in Sinapalo, Sonson, and Northern Marianas College in December 2012 to usher in a new era of communications in the southernmost corner of the Commonwealth.

"This is the latest step in our continuing effort to bring improved products and services to people of the Marianas," said IT&E managing director Rose Soledad. "Our technicians are currently working on projects that will further improve our region's most complete communications network."

IT&E network engineer Inos Yamada credited the two-week project's on-schedule completion to the hard work and co-

operation between IT&E's Eric Barcinas, Ramir De Leon, John Manibusan, Ray Guerrero, and their counterparts with Pacific Micro Tower.

"Everything went as planned. Now our subscribers will be able to experience the same service and coverage enjoyed by IT&E's CDMA subscribers," Yamada said.

Rota residents can upgrade their GSM service by trading their current SIM cards for an IT&E SIM card with a free \$15 prepaid load at IT&E's Songson office this Friday, Jan. 11, from 10am to 6pm. IT&E will also give away phones, prepaid cards, and IT&E gear during a special customer appreciation party Friday night at Aquarius Bar starting at 9pm.

For more information about IT&E's coverage and services, contact IT&E Customer Care at 682-4ITE (4483), or visit its website www.ite.net. Be sure to "Like" us on Facebook www.facebook.com/ITE.CNMI. (IT&E)

time served. The sentence shall start immediately.

Upon his release from prison, Crisostomo will be placed on two years' probation. He was ordered to pay full restitution for all stolen property and damages to DFS in the amount to be determined later. He was also ordered to pay a fine of \$500 and court fee amounting to \$100.

Crisostomo is also barred from visiting or patronizing DFS.

According to Camacho, the severity of Crisostomo's acts warrants greater retribution and incarceration than the four months the defendant wanted.

"The defendant used fake currency to purchase high-end items and then receive legal U.S. currency as change causing DFS to in effect 'laundry' the counterfeit Russian rubles. The specter of counterfeit Russian rubles in the CNMI would be devastating to the CNMI's struggling tourism industry," stated Camacho.

trustee *ad litem*.

"The board has regained capacity, and as a result, the need for the [trustee *ad litem*] has ceased. The court appointed the [trustee *ad litem*] pursuant to Rule 17(c) solely because the Fund lacked a quorum and could not defend itself in this suit. Now that the board has quorum and has regained capacity, the need for the [trustee *ad litem*] has ended," stated the court filing, adding that the removal of the trustee *ad litem* is supported by both law and public policy.

The government also argued that the administration of the Fund is a local matter and should be carried out by the duly appointed trustees and removing the trustee *ad litem* would save hundreds of thousands of

dollars over the course of the litigation.

According to court documents filed yesterday, Razzano billed \$60,949.83 for fees and expenses in just the two months on the position. This rate, according to the government, is well above what an individual trustee would be entitled to for an entire year and more than the annual cap for the whole board.

It was disclosed that the trustee *ad litem* was paid rates ranging from \$60 to \$250 plus per diem and expenses. In contrast, board trustees are limited to \$30 to \$60 per meeting plus per diem while traveling. Under Commonwealth law, the annual compensation for any trustee may not exceed \$6,000 and assuming that there was a full seven-member panel on the board,

the total compensation for the seven trustees would be capped at \$42,000 per annum.

Removing Razzano, according to the government, will prevent the trustee *ad litem* from depleting public funds.

The procedure for terminating the power of an appointed trustee *ad litem* when capacity is restored varies. In some jurisdictions, they follow the rule that the powers of an appointed trustee *ad litem* automatically ceases as a matter of law when a represented party regains capacity. In other jurisdictions, they require a

formal motion to remove the appointed trustee *ad litem*.

The government acknowledged that the court does not have a local rule governing the procedure for removing an appointed trustee *ad litem*. However, the government believes that the court's action—when it declined to include language in its previous order that the trustee *ad litem* would be relieved of his duties when a quorum is restored, and then directed the government to file its papers on the issue—indicates that the latter is the procedure the court would follow.

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Man sentenced to one year in prison for counterfeit rubles

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A 32-year-old man accused of passing counterfeit Russian rubles was sentenced yesterday to one year in prison after pleading guilty to the offense.

Superior Court associate judge Joseph N. Camacho handed down the sentence against Franklin Crisostomo following a guilty plea to theft by deception.

Crisostomo was arrested after he used five fake 5,000 Russian rubles to buy several items at DFS Galleria on Aug. 24, 2012. He was captured by surveillance camera purchasing the items from three different stores at DFS. Among the items were Nike sunglasses, a ladies Coach watch, and Cool Water cologne.

In a four-page order yesterday, Camacho sentenced Crisostomo to the maximum of one-year imprisonment to be served day for day without the possibility of parole. He was given credit for

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TASC arrests six for alleged burglary, theft, fencing

Acting Department of Public Safety commissioner Ambrosio T. Ogomoro announced yesterday additional arrests made by the Thief Apprehension Select Coalition of the Criminal Investigative Bureau. Operations conducted the past few days resulted in the following arrests:

■■■
NAME: SINGERU, Franco B.
AGE: 32 Palauan, male
ADDRESS: Koblerville (Section 8 Housing)
LOCATION OF ARREST: Koblerville (residence of suspect)
DATE AND TIME OF ARREST: Jan. 7, 2013 at 9:15pm
CHARGE(S): Burglary and Theft
BAIL: \$11,000 (cash)
STOLEN PROPERTY VALUE: 21 Scuba Tanks
RECOVERED PROPERTY VALUE: 17 Scuba Tanks
SYNOPSIS: Singeru was arrested for committing a burglary and theft violations at the Past Time Dive Shop in Chalan Kanoa on Oct. 7, 2012 where 21 scuba tanks were stolen. These were the same scuba tanks that were recovered from the Sky Garage Sale in San Jose across the Payless Shoe Source over the weekend. Bail was set at \$11,000 (cash) by CNMI Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho. Singeru was brought to the CNMI Superior Court for a bail hearing on Jan. 8, 2013.

■■■
NAME: TIPINGENI, Peterson C.
AGE: 20, Chuukese, male
ADDRESS: China Town, Garapan
LOCATION OF ARREST: China Town, Garapan (residence of suspect)
DATE AND TIME OF ARREST: Jan. 7, 2013 at 9:07pm
CHARGE(S): Burglary
BAIL: \$25,000 (Cash)
STOLEN PROPERTY VALUE:-00
RECOVERED PROPERTY VALUE:-00-
SYNOPSIS: Tipingeni was arrested for committing a burglary violation at the Hafa Adai Hotel Staff Housing in China Town, Garapan on Jan. 1, 2013. He was found committing the burglary inside the staff housing by the victim to this case, but fled before the police arrived. Further investigation into this case led to the identification of the suspect. Bail was set at \$25,000 (cash) by CNMI Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho. Singeru was brought before the CNMI Superior Court for a bail hearing on Jan. 8, 2013.

■■■
NAME: CABAEL, Kyle
AGE: 21, Hawaiian, male
ADDRESS: San Vicente Area
LOCATION OF ARREST: Capital Hill (surrendered to the CIB)
DATE AND TIME OF ARREST: Jan. 8, 2013 at 9:14am
CHARGE(S): Burglary and Theft

BAIL: \$11,000.00 (Cash) (increased to \$50,000.00 (cash) by the CNMI Superior Court during his bail hearing

STOLEN PROPERTY VALUE: 21 Scuba Tanks, Diving Suits and Fins

RECOVERED PROPERTY VALUE: 17 Scuba Tanks, One Diving Suit and a Pair of Fins

SYNOPSIS: Cabael was arrested for committing a burglary and theft violations at the Past Time Dive Shop in Susupe on Oct. 7, 2012 where a total of 21 scuba tanks, several diving suits and diving fins were stolen. These were the same scuba tanks that were recovered from the Sky Garage Sale in San Jose across the Payless Shoe Source over the weekend. Bail was originally set at \$11,000 (cash) by CNMI Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho, however, that amount has since been increased to \$50,000 (cash) during his initial court appearance on Jan. 8, 2013. Cabael is a co-defendant of Franco B. Singeru and the actual location of the incident is in Susupe and not Chalan Kanoa as earlier reported.

■■■
NAME: SALISIBAN, Mathias
AGE: 27, Filipino-Chamorro, male
ADDRESS: Koblerville Area
LOCATION OF ARREST: Koblerville Area (residence of suspect)

DATE AND TIME OF ARREST: Jan. 8, 2013 at 10:20pm
CHARGE(S): Burglary, conspiracy, criminal mischief and theft

BAIL: \$25,000 (cash)
STOLEN PROPERTY VALUE: Two cases of soda, copper wire, and skill saw, cordless drill and other types of power tools

RECOVERED PROPERTY VALUE: Skill saw and a cordless drill.

SYNOPSIS: Salisiban was arrested for committing a burglary, conspiracy, criminal mischief and theft violation at the former Uno Moda Garment Factory in Afetnas on Dec. 19, 2012. Bail was set at \$25,000 (cash) by the CNMI Superior Court. Salisiban was brought before the CNMI Superior Court for a bail hearing on Jan. 9, 2013.

■■■
NAME: CHEN, Zhi Hong
AGE: 42 Chinese, female
ADDRESS: Koblerville Area
LOCATION OF ARREST: Koblerville Area (residence of suspect)

DATE AND TIME OF ARREST: Jan. 8, 2013 at 9:44pm
CHARGE(S): Drug trafficking, illegal possession of controlled substance and receiving stolen property

BAIL: \$25,000 (Cash)
STOLEN PROPERTY VALUE: Laptop computer and computer monitor
SYNOPSIS: Zhi Hong Chen

was arrested for committing a drug trafficking, illegal possession of a controlled substance and a receiving stolen property violation at her residence in Koblerville. This incident occurred on Jan. 5, 2013 and she is a co-defendant of Garry Lee Evil-sizer. Bail was set at \$25,000 (cash) by the CNMI Superior Court. Chen was brought before the CNMI Superior Court for a bail hearing on Jan. 9, 2013.

■■■
NAME: BLAS, Cecilia Rosa Nikky

AGE: 42, Chamorro-Chuukese, female

ADDRESS: San Antonio Area

DATE OF INCIDENT: Jan. 5, 2013

LOCATION OF ARREST: San Antonio Area (residence of suspect)

DATE AND TIME OF ARREST: Jan. 9, 2013 at 9:44pm

CHARGE(S): Receiving stolen property

BAIL: \$500 (Cash)
STOLEN PROPERTY VALUE: A digital camcorder

RECOVERED PROPERTY VALUE: A digital camcorder

SYNOPSIS: Blas was arrested for committing a receiving stolen property violation at her residence in San Antonio. This incident occurred on Jan. 5, 2013 and she is a co-defendant of Mohammed Jahangir Miah. Bail was set at \$500 (cash) by the CNMI Superior Court. Blas was brought before the CNMI Superior Court for a bail hearing on Jan. 9, 2013.

NOTE: Blas and Chen's arrest was made during sting operations between the Thief Apprehension Select Coalition and the CNMI Inter-agency Financial Crimes and Drug Enforcement Task Force.

■■■
Acting Commissioner Ogomoro assures the public that there are still more arrests to be made in the coming days as evidence is gathered, reports are submitted, and investigations completed. DPS will be expanding its TASC operations to the islands of Tinian and Rota.

TASC is in the process of contacting victims of burglary and theft incidents to come and claim their property. A location will be announced soon where all the recovered stolen property will be on display for victims to procure their stolen items, hopefully by Friday, Jan. 10, 2013. Time and place will be announced.

Any victim of burglary, theft,

arson, or other property crimes in the CNMI who has developed leads or, has any knowledge that may result in closing their case may contact Sgt. Tom Blas at (670) 664-9051 during regular business hours. Your information is critical and unless the police know it, DPS may not be able to act quickly in resolving your case.

Ogomoro would like to caution those who engage in receiving, purchasing or trading for stolen property in the CNMI. Anyone found in violation of receiving stolen property will be arrested.

Should you encounter anyone suspicious and who may be selling merchandise that appears to be stolen or without proper documentation (receipts), you are advised to call and report the matter to the police immediately. If you want to remain anonymous, contact the Crime Stoppers hotline at 234-7272 or use our website at www.nmicrimestoppers.net. **(DPS)**



PUBLIC NOTICE



Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Twelfth and Thirteenth CNMI State Board of Education hereby gives notice that there will be a Special and Inaugural Board Meeting on Monday, January 14, 2013 at 8:30 a.m. at the Governor Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe, Saipan.

CNMI STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL AND INAUGURAL MEETING AGENDA
Monday, January 14, 2013
8:30 a.m.

Governor Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center
Susupe, Saipan

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MHS Glee Club and Oleai Elementary School Choir

INVOCATION
Cherlyn B. Cabrera, Principal of Marianas High School

**TWELFTH (12th) CNMI STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING**

PRELIMINARY MATTERS
Call to Order
Roll Call
Adoption of Agenda

OPENING REMARKS
Herman T. Guerrero, Member
Congressional Delegate Gregorio "Kilili" Camacho Sablan

RECOGNITION OF SERVICE
Rita A. Sablan, Ed.D, Commissioner of Education

Marylou Seman Ada
Denise R. King
Galvin S. Deleon Guerrero

REMARKS OF OUTGOING BOE MEMBERS
Marylou Seman Ada
Denise R. King
Galvin S. Deleon Guerrero

RECOGNITION OF INCOMING BOE MEMBERS
Rita A. Sablan, Ed.D, Commissioner of Education

Marylou Seman Ada
Denise R. King
Janice Marie Ada Tenorio

OATH OF OFFICE
Honorable Alexandro C. Castro
Chief Justice, CNMI Supreme Court

**THIRTEENTH (13th) CNMI STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
INAUGURAL MEETING**

PRELIMINARY MATTERS
Call to Order
Roll Call
Adoption of Agenda

ELECTION OF OFFICERS
Audrey Joy Ada, BOE Student Representative - Pro Tem Chair

SPECIAL REMARKS OF INCOMING BOE MEMBERS
Marylou Seman Ada
Denise R. King
Janice Marie Ada Tenorio

ADJOURNMENT

RETIREMENT OF COLORS
MHS JROTC Dolphin Battalion



DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY & CULTURAL AFFAIRS
P.O. Box 501000 C.K.
Saipan, MP 96950



Opening Date: January 9, 2013

Closing Date: January 23, 2013

Department of Community & Cultural Affairs
FY 2013 COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RE-ANNOUNCEMENT

The Department of Community & Cultural Affairs (DCCA) is soliciting request for proposals for FY 2013 Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) funds as defined in section 676A of the CSBG Act under Title XX of the United States Department of Health and Human Services. A total of \$90,000 is made available to be divided and sub-granted to 3 non-government agencies/non-profit community organizations in the CNMI upon meeting the specific qualifications/provisions of the said funding through the CSBG State Plan.

The purpose of the CSBG funding is to make grants to States and Territories for the reduction of poverty, the revitalization of low-income communities and the empowerment of low-income families to become fully self-sufficient. The special intent of this funding will be to fund projects that will provide services to the community who are considered economically disadvantaged addressed through the CSBG Six (6) National Performance Indicators.

A copy of the grant general requirements/conditions, subgrantee responsibilities and other scope relating to the funding can be obtained at the DYS main office, House #1324 in Capital Hill. For additional questions or inquiries, please contact Vivian T. Sablan, CSBG Program Coordinator, at 664-2559 or Ms. Resel Billy-Magofna at 664-2588.

/s/ Melvin L.O. Faisao
DCCA Secretary

This ad has been paid for by the Community Services Block Grant under
The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Adopt-a-Place program seeks to empower Saipan community

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Several businesses, religious groups, and families are now working on increasing the visual appeal of the island with their participation in the Adopt-a-Place program of the Saipan & Northern Islands Municipal Council.

Twenty-two groups have since joined the program since it went full swing in early 2012. That includes Marpac, which is scheduled to conduct its cleanup at the traffic intersection of Quartermaster along Middle Road this Saturday, Jan. 12, at 6:30am.

Council chair Ramon B. Camacho said yesterday that their office came up with the pro-

gram to connect with different groups in the community such as nonprofit, religious, business, and even families, in an effort to revitalize neighborhoods and the island in general.

Camacho said the program's main goal is to bring the community together and build a sense of ownership among participants as they get involved in

efforts to maintain their own selected places for cleanup.

"If we continue to rely on the government, the community tends to sit back. But if you empower the community, then we can all work together and reduce unacceptable eyesores or criminal activities on the island. The more the community participates, the less problems

we're going to be seeing," he explained.

Camacho noted that involved groups do their best to care for their assigned area because of the hard work they exert for its upkeep.

According to Camacho, what differentiates Adopt-a-Place from similar programs is that it only involves main-

taining a specific area that measures less than a mile, including road medians, which he said should be manageable and easy to maintain.

He said the community has been "very positive and receptive" to the program but there are still many areas on island that need to be covered by the program. That means other groups are still welcome to join Adopt-a-Place.

He disclosed plans to meet with various ethnic groups on island as well as the Public School System through Education Commissioner Rita A. Sablan, Ed D. Camacho said he will try to work with Sablan and figure out how they can involve high school students, allowing young learners to earn extra credits.

"It would be nice to see more and more groups coming together and taking steps to work on this program because it will benefit all of us," Camacho told *Saipan Tribune*.

Once the island is revitalized, it would be easier to promote Saipan as a tourist destination, Camacho pointed out. "It should start among us, the members of this community."

To join the program or for more information, visit the Saipan & Northern Islands Municipal Council next to the post office in Chalan Kanoa or call 664-2700 or 01.

NMHC sees medium REAC score for Rota subdivision

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Northern Marianas Housing Corp. expects to get a medium score in the Real Estate Assessment Center inspection on Rota subdivision that is scheduled at the end of the month, according to corporate director Jesse Palacios.

He said a medium score, which ranges between 80 and 89 points out of the 100-point system, would mean an inspection once every two years.

REAC's mission is to provide and promote the use of accurate, timely, and reliable information assessing the condition of Housing and Urban Development's portfolio; to provide information to help ensure safe, decent and affordable housing; and to identify fraud, abuse and waste of HUD resources.

The Rota subdivision was not included in the assessment conducted by REAC inspector William Wong in September 2012.

Only three properties were inspected during last year's visit. Both Koblerville and Mihaville on Saipan scored 88 while the Tinian subdivi-

sion received 97.

"The delay of the federal inspector is due to the flight situation to Rota," Palacios told *Saipan Tribune*.

Meanwhile, Palacios revealed that NMHC technical maintenance coordinator Scott Pinaula is scheduled to fly to Rota next week to conduct a follow up inspection on a foreclosed property from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development program.

The property, he said, was one of the rehabilitation projects in Sinapalo using Neighborhood Stabilization Program 3 funds.

"We needed to renovate it and make it available to low-income families on Rota," said Palacios.

NSP is a funding program under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that provides emergency assistance to state and local governments to acquire and redevelop foreclosed properties that might otherwise become sources of abandonment and blight.

Palacios said that another property rehabilitated using NSP3 funds is on Tinian.



TERRITORIAL FLAGS AMENDMENT

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Delegate Madeleine Z. Bordallo (D-GU) joins Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) and Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) at a press conference in the U.S. Capitol last month to support an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 that would require the Department of Defense to display flags from D.C. and the territories at U.S. military installations around the world. The amendment was offered by Sablan.

Camacho elected anew to chair FSA county committee

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Ramon B. Camacho has been elected to serve as chairman for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency CNMI County Committee.

Camacho, who is on his third term in the committee, revealed that the county election was held yesterday via teleconference.

County committee members are elected to office by their peers and serve as the representative voice for agriculture producers in the county, and they are responsible for communicating with USDA to ensure that national programs are adapted to fit local needs. County committees are responsible for making decisions on

issues including commodity loans and payments, conservation programs, disaster assistance programs, and emergency programs.

The CNMI County Committee is composed of one representative each from Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

Camacho, who represents Saipan, was nominated by Rota's James Manglona. The nomination was concurred by Tinian's Ignacio Aquilino during yesterday's election, with the presence of Tom Camacho, FSA executive director for CNMI and Guam Counties.

Camacho vowed to do more outreach programs for Commonwealth farmers, strengthening efforts to revive the islands' agriculture industry.

Camacho, who is also the chairman of the Saipan & Northern Islands Municipal Council, said his outreach programs would focus on urging farmers to take advantage of FSA's various programs.

He said that one of his recommendations on the county committee level is to teach local farmers proper accounting and bookkeeping practices.

"Farmers are not behind-the-desk people. They're out there cultivating the soil and planting their crops. So we're trying to find ways that are more convenient for the farmers so they can consolidate the receipts pertaining to farm operations every end of the year," Camacho told *Saipan Tribune*.

He said he will be working

with CNMI Delegate Gregorio Kilili Sablan who, together with Guam Delegate Madeleine Bordallo (D-GU), is pushing for the crop insurance annual fee waiver for farmers in the Commonwealth and Guam.

Camacho disclosed that the number of farmers who avail of crop insurance dropped when the \$300-fee for multiple crops was increased to between \$750 and \$900.

"That fee is identical to mainland farmers who deal with miles and miles of farmland. Local farmers only deal with smaller acres. I'm crossing my fingers that they can amend that to benefit Marianas farmers," he said.

Camacho's term in the committee level will expire in December.

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANAS ISLANDS
PSS HEAD START PROGRAM
P.O. BOX 501370, SAIPAN, MP 96950

Head Start Policy Council Agenda

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, the Head Start Policy Council hereby gives notice that it will have a Regular Meeting on Friday, January 11, 2013 at 11:00 am, Tanapag Head Start Resource Center, Tanapag Saipan.

- I. Preliminary Matters**
 1. Call to Order
 2. Roll Call
 3. Quorum
 4. Adoption of Agenda
 5. Adoption of Minutes:
 - a. September 14, 2012 (Regular Meeting)
 - b. October 11, 2012
- II. Public Comments**
- III. Communication**
 1. From the State Board of Education
 2. From the Office of Head Start
- IV. Monthly Reports**
 1. Director
 2. Managers
 3. Interim Finance Director
 4. HPC Standing Committees
 5. Center Representatives
- V. Old Business**
 1. SY 2012-2013 Written Service Area Plans
 2. Triennial Review
- VI. New Business**
 1. Meeting with Richard Ybara (January 16, 2013, 1:30 pm @ BOE)
 2. Child Outcomes Report
 3. Miscellaneous Matters
 4. Executive Session
 5. Next Meeting
- VII. Adjournment**

This meeting is open to the public, interested individuals are welcome to attend. Any person(s) requiring special accommodations may contact Ms. Annie Santos at (670) 664-3751/3761 or email address at ana.santos@cnmipss.org; several days notice is required.

/s/ Antonio Mesngon
Chairperson

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Invitation to renovate Kagman center

The Kagman Community Center wants to renovate the facility when the Legislature provides funding. Contractors who are interested can come to a discussion at the center today, Jan. 10, at 1:20pm. If not available at that time, call or send an email to make an appointment by Jan. 11, Friday.

Contact Daniel Huh at 285-2221 or kagmancommunity@gmail.com. (PR)

Survivors, caregivers support meeting

All people facing cancer, their family members, and caregivers are invited to the next Commonwealth Cancer Association's monthly support meeting scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 17, 2013, at the Hyatt Regency Saipan's Chamolinian Room starting at 5:30pm. This month's support meeting guest speaker will be Nola Hix, MMAC subcommittee survivors' chairperson. Her presentation will focus on MMAC 2013. To RSVP or for more information, call the CCA at 682-0050 or email at ccamarinas@gmail.com. (PR)

Saipan municipal council sets meeting

The 12th Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council will hold an organizational session on Jan. 14, 2013, at 9:30am at the Municipal Council chambers in Chalan Kanoa. For more information, contact the Municipal Council office at 664-2700/2701. (PR)

Power outage on Saturday

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. has scheduled a power interruption on Saturday, Jan. 12, 2013, from 8:30am to 12:30pm to replace a rotting power line

on Dandan road directly in front of the Dandan Elementary School.

Another crew will replace a rotted power pole in the upper Dandan Homestead area near Gatho Ave. Water services may be effected in the area during the power interruption; however, all services should be restored after the powers is re-energized.

Areas affected include Kiya 1 (2nd partial) from the former San Vicente Round House south on Dandan Road to the Flame Tree Road intersection and east toward the Hawaiian Rock Quarry to the Obyan areas. (CUC)

NMC announces Natural Resource Management scholarship

The Northern Marianas College is reminding all Natural Resource Management majors and those interested in pursuing a career in natural resources that the deadline to apply for the NMC Cari-Pac Scholarship is on Friday, Jan. 25, 2013.

The Cari-Pac Scholarship Program aims to promote higher education by providing financial assistance for college students in their pursuit of professional careers in managing natural resources. The program also seeks to provide current public and private sector employees with opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills and to enhance their career and professional development.

"This is one of only a few scholarships available to part-

time students, so those who have full-time jobs and want to take classes in the evening can still take advantage of the scholarships," said Ross Manglona, director of the NMC Cooperative Research Extension and Education Service.

The Cari-Pac Program is designed to offer an associate degree in Natural Resource Management, prepare students to pursue or advance careers requiring a broad background in agricultural, marine, environmental, and natural resources management. The program also helps students to transfer to a related baccalaureate degree program at other colleges or universities.

The NMC Natural Resources Management scholarship program provides 15 full-time stu-

dents with about \$1,140 each and 10 part-time students with about \$570 each, amounts of which are sufficient to pay for most tuition costs per semester.

Scholarship selection will be based on merit and financial need. The scholarship funds will be also be awarded on the basis of the applicant's community involvement, academic background, letter of recom-

mendation, and a written essay. An interview may also be required.

To be eligible, a student must be a U.S. citizen (or green card holder) and a CNMI resident for the past three years; be accepted and enrolled as a part-time or full-time student at NMC; have a high school or college cumulative GPA of 2.00 or better; and be able to demonstrate financial need.

If selected to receive the scholarship, the applicant must also sign an agreement stating that he or she will work in the Commonwealth after graduating from the Northern Marianas College for a period twice as long as the period for which the applicant received the scholarship.

For additional information about the scholarship or to pick up an application, visit

the NMC Financial Aid Office in Building N or call 234-5498 Ext. 1527. Applications can also be downloaded online at www.nmcnet.edu.

The Cari-Pac scholarship program was made possible through funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Resident Instruction Grants for Insular Areas, Award No. 2008-38416-19574. **(NMC)**

NMC English and Math placement test schedule

The Northern Marianas College will be conducting the English and Math placement tests on the following dates:

ENGLISH PLACEMENT TEST

■ Jan. 10, Thursday: 9am – 4pm, Building W, (As Terlaje, Saipan)

■ Jan. 11, Friday: 9am – 4pm, Building W, (As Terlaje, Saipan)

MATH PLACEMENT TEST

■ Jan. 10, Thursday: 9am – 4pm, Building W, (As Terlaje, Saipan)

■ Jan. 11, Friday: 9am –

4pm, Building W, (As Terlaje, Saipan)

Those who wish to take courses at NMC must take the placement tests. Registration for NMC's spring 2013 semester will begin on Monday, Jan. 14, 2013.

There is a \$25 fee for each placement test that must be paid in advance at the NMC Cashier (Monday-Friday, 8:30am-4pm). Students will not be allowed into the testing room without proof of payment (a receipt for the placement test fee, or the NMC application fee). Payment for

the application fee will cover the English placement test fee. If you have a placement test fee waiver, students must obtain a placement test slip from the Office of Admissions and Records prior to taking the test.

Test takers must also bring a valid photo ID (driver's license, passport or school ID) and pencils. No admittance to the testing room will be allowed after the starting time.

Those who wish to take the English and Math placement tests are strongly encouraged

to contact the Testing Center to schedule an appointment. "Walk-in" test takers will be accommodated based on seat availability.

To schedule an appointment to take the English and Math placement tests or for more information, contact Daniel Kintol at 234-5498 Ext. 2351.

Calculators may be used when taking the math placement test. For additional information about the placement tests and registration for the spring 2013 semester, log on to www.nmcnet.edu. **(NMC)**

MMAC team captains' meeting on Jan. 17

The 2013 Marianas March Against Cancer committee will hold their first team captains' meeting on Jan. 17 at 5:30pm at the DFS Saipan, Ltd. conference room in Garapan (second floor). All former teams and all who are interested in joining the MMAC are encouraged to attend this important meeting.

The MMAC is the largest annual cancer fundraising event in the Northern Mariana Islands. It is the signature fundraising activity of the Commonwealth Cancer Association, a volunteer-led non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that ensures all funds raised are spent entirely in the CNMI on cancer awareness programs, cancer patient assistance, and other cancer-related services.

"The 2013 MMAC committee is gearing up for our big event. We are inviting all former teams to attend this meeting. We

are also actively recruiting families, corporations, schools, government agencies and non-profit organizations who are interested in raising badly needed funds for the fight against cancer," said 2013 overall MMAC committee chairman Manny Borja. "The MMAC is a family-friendly event that honors all cancer survivors and remembers our loved ones who have lost the battle against this deadly affliction. Please join us at this meeting for more information on how you can assist in the fight against cancer."

The 2013 Marianas March Against Cancer will be held on April 26-27 from 6pm to 6am. Its first major sponsor is Traders Insurance Co. For more information on the MMAC call 682-0050, email emanuel.borja@gmail.com or visit www.ccamarianas.org. **(MMAC)**



THANK-YOU POSTER

A student at the Joaquina M. Rabaulman Head Start Center in Garapan shows off a handmade poster the students made to express their gratitude to the Saipan Soccer School during a visit to the school last month.

CLARISSA V. DAVID

Notice of Zoning Board Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the Zoning Board will be held on Thursday, January 17, 2013 at 5:00 PM, Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten DanDan Commercial Bldg., Saipan
(Tel: 234-9661 • Fax: 234-9666 • e-mail: www.zoning.gov.mp)

A. Preliminary Matters

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of December 13, 2012 minutes
5. Public Comments (*not related to files for discussion under item B. Public Hearings*)

B. Public Hearings

1. **Conditional Use Application #2011-5393:** Mr. Tolkach Evgenii is proposing to operate a synthetic skating rink on public land lot #054 H 01. This use is classified as Outdoor, Amusement and will be located next to the basketball court along Beach Road, Susupe, across from the House of Justice and north of Saipan World Resort. This area is zoned as Public Resource.
2. **Enforcement Hearing on Notice of Violation (NOV) # 2011-4917,** issued 10/24/12, to Mr. Zheng Shao-Wei, imposing a fine in the amount of \$2,250.00. The Zoning Administrator issued the NOV to Hong Ye Hardware for violating the terms and conditions of its permit #2010-0040 (issued 9/3/10) and approved site plan, by failing to provide parking as required in the permit and the zoning law. Hong Ye appeals the imposition of penalties by the Zoning Administrator and seeks more time to comply with the terms of its permit pursuant to section 1406 of the Saipan Zoning Law of 2008.

C. Communications/ Reports

D. Old Business.

1. None

E. New Business

1. Office operations report

F. Executive (Closed) Session

G. Miscellaneous: Other Matters, Announcements, Next Meeting, Adjourn.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the Board meeting, or if you require assistance, please contact the Zoning Administrator, Therese T. Ogumoro, at 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & 10 CMC 3511, et seq.).

/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Zoning Board Chairman

NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

for

Enforcement – Notice of Violation #2011-4917

Date: January 17, 2013, Thursday

Time: 5:00 pm

Place: Zoning Board Conference Room, 2nd flr, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan

The public is invited to attend a Zoning Board hearing on the appeal of Hong Ye Hardware from Notice of Violation (NOV) # 2011-4917, issued 10/24/12 to Mr. Zheng Shao-Wei, imposing a fine in the amount of \$2,250.00. The Zoning Administrator issued the NOV to Hong Ye Hardware for violating the terms and conditions of its permit #2010-0040 (issued 9/3/10) and approved site plan, by failing to provide parking as required in the permit and the zoning law. Hong Ye appeals the imposition of penalties by the Zoning Administrator and seeks more time to comply with the terms of its permit pursuant to section 1406 of the Saipan Zoning Law of 2008.

Hong Ye Hardware is located along Beach Road, Susupe, on lot 008 H 28, across from Bank of Saipan. Interested parties may comment on this enforcement action orally or in writing at the public hearing.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & Saipan Zoning Law of 2008).

/s/ Therese T. Ogumoro, Zoning Administrator

NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

for

EY Corporation dba: Tropical Ice

The public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board public hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. Mr. Tolkach Evgenii is proposing to operate a synthetic skating rink on public land lot #054 H 01. This use is classified as Outdoor, Amusement and will be located next to the basketball court along Beach Road, Susupe, across from the House of Justice and north of Saipan World Resort. This area is zoned as Public Resource.

Date: January 17th, 2013 Thursday

Time: 5:00 pm

Place: Zoning Board Conference Room, 2nd flr, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan

The above application may be viewed at the Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan. Comments on the project may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments shall be submitted in writing to the Zoning Office no later than 4:30pm, January 16, 2013. Written comments may also be submitted via email to therese.ogumoro@zoning.gov.mp, via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950 or delivered to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & Saipan Zoning Law of 2008).

/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Board Chairman



ROTARY VISITOR

Rotary International District 2750 Gov. Takamoto Sakuma, third right, receives a Rotary Club of Saipan banner from the club's officials during a meeting at the Hyatt Regency Saipan last month. Also in photo are, from left to right, Rotary Club of Saipan secretary Richard Cody, vice president Laila Boyer, president Pete Shilling, translator Sonomi Sasayama, and assistant district governor Michael Perrin.

CLARISSA V. DAVID

Marines, Navy, Guam police hold exercise

HAGATNA, Guam—The U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Navy, in cooperation with local law enforcement, finished yesterday a three-day training to enhance skills and maintain readiness to local, national and homeland security. Elements of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25, the Guam Police Department, and the Guam Homeland Security/Office of Civil Defense collaborated to conduct portions of a Realistic Urban Training Exercise, or RUTEX, in Guam from Jan. 7 to 9.

"Training in Guam is vitally important because we can train in a different environment than what we are accustomed to on Okinawa. This variety ensures we will maintain our readiness and the capability to respond to any contingency in the region," said Col. John E. Merna, com-

manding officer, 31st MEU. "This training package provides the Marines of the 31st MEU the opportunity to exercise vital skill sets that better prepare us for any challenge we may face as the most ready forward deployed force in the Pacific."

An element composed of Marines and sailors of the Maritime Raid Force, 31st MEU participated, including elements of Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, SWAT Special Operations Unit, Marine Patrol and K9 Unit from the Guam Police Department will join them. "Safety of the public is paramount and we want to ensure that this realistic exercise will not compromise anyone's safety or well being," said Homeland Security adviser Pedro Leon Guerrero. "At the same time, we welcome this exercise and will

continue to engage and coordinate with all entities to update and maintain our jurisdictional plans/annexes, SOPs, MOUs and policies. We are confident this exercise will assist us [GHS/OCD] in executing the appropriate courses of actions."

As with any training exercise the police department or the military on Guam conduct, all precautions were taken to ensure the exercise was safe and secure. Local authorities worked with businesses, fishermen, and organizations in the area to accommodate any safety concerns they have. There was minimal obstruction to daily operations in the area.

This is the second time RUTEX has been held in Guam and the 31st MEU is honored to be hosted in Guam again, and hopes to continue the partnership and cooperation. The

31st MEU is often the first to respond to crisis in the Asia-Pacific region.

This training exercise is standard and not in response to any real or perceived threat in the region.

RUTEX, previously known as Training in Urban Environment Exercise, has been successfully conducted in Guam and various cities throughout the United States such as Miami Florida, Savannah Georgia, New Orleans, Los Angeles, Columbia South Carolina and San Diego since 1985. **(PR)**

Active Employee members of Fund sets meeting

The second meeting of the non-retired members of the NMI Retirement Fund Defined Benefits Plan, who have submitted applications for withdrawal from the Fund, will be held on Saturday, Jan. 12 at 3pm at the American Memorial Park Theater.

The Active Members United Committee will present the position statement that will be submitted to the U.S. District Court by AMU, and additional important actions related to the submission of the statement and upcoming hearings that will require the participation of the non-retired members of the Fund will also be discussed at the meeting.

All non-retired members of the Fund who have applied for withdrawal are encouraged to attend. For further information you may contact Mark Staal via email at staalbird7@gmail.com or Robert Hunter at telephone 789-1662 or via email at roberthunter@gmail.com. **(PR)**

Proposed pesticide regs to be published in Register

The Division of Environmental Quality wants the community to be informed that it will publish the proposed pesticides regulation in the Commonwealth Register on Jan. 28, 2013.

"The new regulations will supersede the Pesticide Management Regulations, which were adopted in 1994 and are now obsolete," according to Pesticide and Storage Tank branch manager Reina Camacho. According to Camacho, the proposed regulation further defines and expands the prohibited acts in accordance with federal law, Federal Insecticide Fungicide, Rodenticide Act. The proposed regulation shall reduce the fee associated with obtaining pesticide applicator certification and clarifies the permit requirements and conditions relating to use of pesticides, including stor-

age and transportation.

Camacho said the importation of pesticide and pesticide devices are redefined and shall apply to any 1) any restricted use pesticide from any country into the CNMI; (2) any pesticide or pesticide device manufactured in or shipped by or through a foreign country; any termiticide, including those used for crack, crevice, and spot treatment; (3) any pesticide used to control pests on fruit and/or vegetable crops or other agricultural products; and (4) pesticides used for fumigation, hospital grade disinfection and commercial purposes.

"The reason for the new regulation is to ensure the proper management of pesticide use, sale and other requirements to meet federal standards and practices applicable to the Islands,"

said Camacho. The regulations apply to all persons that import, sale or distribute, use, handle and or apply pesticides.

View the proposed Pesticide Management Regulations online at

<http://deq.gov.mp/artdoc/Sec7art221ID776.pdf>.

DEQ has scheduled the following stakeholder sessions to answer any questions about the proposed regulations: Every Tuesday during the month of January and February from 9am until 11am at the DEQ conference room (Jan 15, 22, 29 and Feb 5, 12, 19, and 26).

Visit the www.deq.gov.mp for an updated schedule or to send your written comments or request additional information email stargetankpesticides@deq.gov.mp. You may also call the program at 664-8512. **(DEQ)**

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Jan. 10, 2001

CDA notes modest property foreclosure

Despite the rising number of delinquent loans, the Commonwealth Development Authority has reported that it managed to minimize foreclosure of properties of remiss borrowers who now comprise more than 20 percent of the agency's overall clientele. However, Executive Director Marylou S. Ada said CDA may still be forced to forfeit properties of clients whose outstanding loans have not been performing in over two years unless they approach the agency and ask for a loan workout. Since the local economy started dipping in 1997 due to the Asian financial crisis, CDA has foreclosed mortgaged property of only seven borrowers who were not able to service monthly loan payment.

Wendy's files for bankruptcy

Two months after closure of its restaurant on Saipan, the local franchisee of the international fastfood chain Wendy's has filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy, claiming debts of over a quarter million dollars. Wendy's Saipan, Inc. president Charles Jordan filed the papers yesterday at the U.S. District Court following a decision by its board of stockholders last month. The company opened its lone restaurant on the island in 1996, but ceased its operation due to the prolonged economic difficulties confronting the CNMI. Among creditors seeking payment are its 24 employees who were not given their wages and salaries for the last pay period before shutting the doors of Wendy's Saipan for good on Oct. 30 last year.

Jan. 10, 2002

FAA gives Salas, CPA board high marks

The Federal Aviation Administration commended the Commonwealth Ports Authority for its efforts in ensuring the success of the many projects jointly carried out by the CPA and the FAA. In a letter to Gov.-elect Juan N. Babauta and Lt. Gov.-elect Diego T. Benavente, FAA Regional Administrator William C. Withycombe said CPA Executive Director Carlos H. Salas deserves high praise and recognition for his planning, organization, and insightful leadership. Withycombe said the FAA and the CPA have a very productive working relationship that resulted in many unique and valuable programs that improved the aviation infrastructure of the Northern Marianas.

POI achieves ISO 9001 certification

Pacific Oriental Inc. has become one of the few companies in Micronesia to attain ISO 9001 international quality certification. For POI, attaining the certification included developing a corporate mission statement and values, as well as a comprehensive quality policy concerned with its services, as well as the handling of clients. ISO, which stands for "International Organization for Standardization" is an independent standards body based in Geneva, Switzerland with a membership of approximately 130 countries that agree on common standards of high quality. "The POI team worked extremely hard and spent many hours over several months in order to prepare and pass this audit," said POI general manager Frank B. Camacho.

Jan. 10, 2003

Summit eyed to solve fiscal crisis

Amid the worsening fiscal crisis faced by the CNMI government, Rota Mayor Benjamin T. Manglona is proposing that an economic summit-to be attended by public sector leaders and businessmen-be conducted to come up with unified solutions. Manglona made this request to Gov. Juan N. Babauta, as the Commonwealth considers new belt-tightening measures that could result in reduction of work hours for government employees. "As we begin to consider reducing the size of government, hiring freezes, shorter workweeks and, perhaps, more radical solutions to the CNMI's financial difficulties, we suggest a summit," Manglona said.

MPLA has \$12M uncollectibles

The Marianas Public Lands Authority said it has at least \$12 million in receivables that it may no longer be able to collect. MPLA board chairperson Ana Demapan-Castro disclosed in a recent interview that, of the agency's \$14 million in receivables, only \$2 million can be collected. "We've got only \$2 million receivables. This means the collection of the remaining \$12 million is in doubt," she said. This, she said, is one of the reasons why the board hired an independent consultant, Rex Palacios, to evaluate the MPLA's accounting system. "Mr. Palacios will give us reports," she said.

Island Snapshots



ART COMPETITION
Hopwood Junior High School principal Jonas Barcinas, standing second from left, is joined by teachers, students and members of the Lion Club to show off their certificates of participation in the club's Art Competition. The school level winners' artwork will be sent to Guam for the final regional competition. The staff and management of Hopwood would like to thank art teacher Mr. Freddy and Mr. Escobar for engaging the students in this process.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Happy birthday to Uncle Tanicio L. Kaipat aka TJ! May God bless you with many more to come and celebrate! Enjoy and be safe! With much love, KaiLin.



POST-SOCA
Rep. Stanley Torres congratulates Gov. Benigno R. Fitial after the governor delivered his State of the Commonwealth Address on Tuesday, Jan. 8, 2013, at the House of Representatives' chamber on Capital Hill.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE



'LISTENING TOUR'
Habele board members meet with Saint Mary's School principal during a recent "Listening Tour" in Yap, Federated States of Micronesia. Meetings were held with state government officials, traditional chiefs, public and private school educators, as well as parents and community members in the villages.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



DONATION FOR PABLO VICTIMS
The Federation of Asian and Pacific People of Guam led by its president, James Ji, turns over a \$ 1,000 donation for the Philippine National Red Cross to Vice Consul Maria Paz G. Cortes. The donation is intended to benefit the families and communities affected by Typhoon Pablo. Photo shows, from left, Gerry Marcos, Kilad Callaghan (PRO), Tessie Marcos (former president), James Ji (president), Vice Consul Maria Paz G. Cortes, Joseph Hsu (vice president), Larie Pangelinan (board member), Pandinos Suzuki (board member), and Tim Santos (treasurer).

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



RESCUE EXERCISE
DEDEDO, Guam—Fire Capt. Sal Montverde, Guam Fire Rescue, and John Bamba, communications technician for Guam Homeland Security, look out to the open ocean for signs of persons in the water while rescue crews are en route by sea and air. The agencies established an Incident Command Post at Tanguisson Beach near the exercise area. From the ICP, agencies can jointly coordinate communications, search efforts and media inquiries.

USCG

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

Venezuela after Chavez

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez is almost certainly a no-show for Thursday's constitutionally scheduled inauguration.

Chavez hasn't been seen or heard from since leaving for Cuba for a fourth cancer surgery Dec. 11. His condition is described as "delicate" in government statements, but his political opponents want more information—beginning with proof that he's alive.

Good luck getting answers out of the despots who run Venezuela—or Cuba.

Chavez has long modeled himself after his idol and mentor, Fidel Castro, from his bombastic antagonism toward the United States to the secrecy surrounding his illness. Almost two years into their president's medical adventure, Venezuelans don't even know what kind of cancer he has.

Obligated to accept (or not) his assurances that he would be around to serve a third six-year term, they apparently gave him the benefit of the doubt. In October, Chavez vanquished his first serious challenger, Henrique Capriles, despite being too sick to campaign.

But he can't defeat his own mortality. Chavez, 58, has long maneuvered to set himself up as "president for life," but it's not at all certain that he'll outlive the frail but lingering Castro, 86.

Barely two months after the election, Chavez announced that he was returning to Cuba for treatment and made clear his wishes should he not survive: Publicly, he urged Venezuelans to elect his vice president, Nicolas Maduro, a career Chavista and committed leftist. Privately, he met with military leaders to plead with them to support Maduro.

The president has good reason to worry about the future of his socialist revolution. The Chavistas and their opposition are fractious coalitions cemented by their allegiance—or animosity—toward Chavez. Before his endorsement of Maduro, Chavez had done little to groom a successor.

Venezuela's constitution isn't clear about what should happen if Chavez is too sick to be sworn in for another term. His supporters say they'll get around that ambiguity by postponing the inauguration.

There's nothing gray about what's supposed to happen if he dies: an election within 30 days. But the timing of his death matters greatly, depending on how you interpret the constitution. If a president dies, the vice president is to serve as interim president until the election; if a president-elect dies before inauguration day, the reins pass temporarily to the president of the National Assembly. In this case that would be Diosdado Cabello, who has strong ties to military leaders—whose loyalty to Chavez is not necessarily transferable to Maduro.

Chavez's opponents suggest that Cuban leaders and the like-minded Maduro might withhold news of the president's death to manipulate that scenario to their advantage.

Capriles, who got 45 percent of the vote in October, would likely run again.

Whoever ends up running Venezuela will preside over the mess Chavez made of a prosperous and promising nation. Venezuela after Chavez will likely be plagued by political turmoil and economic struggle. It's not the legacy he envisioned. But it's his doing.

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"JUST BECAUSE ONE GUY DOES SOMETHING CRAZY, WHAT MAKES YOU THINK IT'S OK TO CHANGE THE RULES FOR EVERYONE?"

State of the Commonwealth Address

Editor's Note: The following is the continuation of the State of the Commonwealth address that Gov. Benigno R. Fitial delivered on Jan. 8, 2013, at the Legislature on Capital Hill. It is being published in two parts due to its length.

Second of a two-part series

Retirement system

I will talk next about the problems with the retirement system that continue to harm the well-being of our Commonwealth. One of the main issues confronting us is the unfunded liabilities associated with the retirement system, and this problem will continue in 2013. The Retirement Fund problem is the result of years of legislation that created unfunded liabilities, and this problem has reached a point of crisis.

There is no one solution to this problem. Resolution of this matter can be achieved in steps that narrow and clarify the liabilities. I believe that adoption of P.L. 17-82 is an important step in this process because it allows current employees to withdraw their contributed portion while at the same time reducing the overall liability of the fund. This process will allow us to reduce the total liability and clarify the amount of the unfunded liability.

For this reason, I do not accept the position of the trustee *ad litem*, Mr. Razzano, and I do not think that his process protects the interests of either the retirees or current employees.

We need to bring resolution to the retirement fund issue this year, and I believe that the first step is to allow for voluntary withdrawal by current employees as a means of reducing and clarifying the liability at issue.

I want to be clear that no one has proposed abandoning our commitment to the existing retirees. Instead, what is proposed is a reduction in the overall liability, quantification of the exact amount of the remaining liability and then development of a financial plan to meet our obligations to these retirees.

I realize that retirement benefits are a serious issue to the families in our community that are dependent on these benefits. However, we also must realize that the prior structure could not be sustained, and we need to develop a plan that balances the obligations, needs, and resources of our small economy. I want to reiterate that I understand the importance of these issues to the current retirees, and we will minimize the adverse effects on them in everything we do with the retirement system.

I also think it is important to press our cause in the U.S. Congress for long-term unemployment benefits and full social security benefits without requiring additional financial sacrifices by the Commonwealth. The rate and extent of our economic decline is far greater than that experienced anywhere else under the U.S. flag, and

By **BENIGNO R. FITIAL**

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Benigno R. Fitial is the governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.



these measures would be effective in helping us recover.

Commonwealth Utilities Corp.

Next I will talk about the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation. CUC has been a continuing point of frustration over the last decade. But there have been some significant improvements. It wasn't long ago that the island of Saipan was crippled with a complete breakdown in power generation with power limited to a few hours a day. This had a devastating effect on business and households. It was only by placing CUC under emergency authority were we able to bring in temporary generators that enabled us time to rebuild the aging electrical system. Through this effort we have restored a reliable power system although it is still an antiquated structure based on outdated technologies.

One of the largest impediments to expansion of our economy is the high utility rates. Every resident is expressing frustration with the high cost of power and every single business that has closed cites utility costs as one of the principal reasons. These high power rates are reflective of the inefficiencies of the current power generation system and the high cost of diesel fuel. We do not have any ready way out of either of these limitations.

In 2013, we will continue to invest in CUC as our resources will allow, and we will continue to consider alternatives to diesel power. A recent study by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory identifies that the Commonwealth has signs of the availability of geothermal energy. If we can develop geothermal energy we could achieve significant reduction in our utility costs and this would directly benefit both households and businesses. In order clarify this potential we will complete our examination of the development of geothermal energy in 2013, and we are hopeful for positive results.

One would think that I, as governor, can easily move resources to address Commonwealth problems. But that is not the case. My experience is that often legal restrictions, cross currents in the Legislature where there are legitimate differences of opinion, and federal government considerations prevent quick action. An example of this is the effort to bring in alternative energy sources, a subject

See STATE on Next Page

Talking to a wall, connecting with God

JERUSALEM—It's different each time, the sensation driven by my religious body temperature at the moment, each occasion leavened by the vicissitudes of life, by doubt, skepticism, spiritual immobility or vague rhapsody—and certainly by my own vanities. One first has to get past the sense of being an intruder, even if one is incontrovertibly Jewish, because the landlords of Jerusalem's Western Wall, a conglomerate of stern, bearded men from a variety of ecclesiastic tribes, are rather possessive of their default contract with the place.

They scold you with their fierce eyes if you don't have a skullcap (though never examining your heart), they imperiously ask you for money as if to pay for your unworthiness, and they seem resigned to the presence of sincere folks who are neither dressed for the 17th century nor given to the very judgmental tendencies that controvert the entire thesis of prayer.

But I arrive with my own liturgy; I don't care what they think. My cousins fought in the alleyways of the Old City of Jerusalem in June 1967 to reclaim the Jewish Quarter that the Jordanians had occupied since 1948. My father battled and was wounded in Israel's War of Independence after several Arab armies flouted the United Nations' two-state solution and kept up their efforts to drive out the Jews.

It is ironic that my mother and her granddaughters are not per-

mitted to pray in the same spaces as the oligarchic men who have co-opted the blood and yearning of Jewish history in favor of their sectarian plutocracy in Jerusalem.

My deal with the wall is my own affair, and it has evolved with the crises and upheavals and reversals and triumphs and breakthroughs of my life, and that is more honest than a chart of robotic prayers.

When I touch the wall, I no longer feel that simple-minded awe that was driven by guilty deference to the swaying rabbinical landlords who swarm about the place as thick as their black coats. I just don't believe that God sees any difference between them in their traditional garb and me in my jeans and blazer. Neither they nor people like me, men or women, are exclusively right or wrong, just or unjust.

I place little notes in the wall but I don't think God has a minstrel on the other side of it who collects and annotates the pleas, names and confessionals.

I follow the ritual because so many people have been doing this for so many centuries that the very cycle—and its uniformity and peacefulness and solemnity—instills the absolute holiness that attends this place.

God is there, to paraphrase rabbinical tradition, because we have let God in.

India rape case reveals a disturbing culture

The horrific story of a 23-year-old woman in New Delhi, India, who died from her injuries a week after being savagely raped and beaten by six men on a bus has galvanized the world's outrage. It has also drawn attention to the general plight of women and girls in India's still-patriarchal culture, including the shameful treatment of sex-crime victims. Yet some American and European feminists worry that the focus on India gives Western societies too much credit for protecting women's rights.

The fear that speaking out against women's oppression in the Third World might be too pro-Western is typical of some quarters of the feminist left.

In the British daily, *The Guardian*, Irish feminist Emer O'Toole wrote that discussions of the tragedy in India "minimize the enormity of Western rape culture." In the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, columnist Doug Saunders reports a Twitter exchange with a Canadian activist who told him that while India needs to question its culture's treatment of women, "so do all countries."

Meanwhile, Saunders has been labeled a "rape apologist" by American feminist blogger Melissa McEwan because he had the temerity to suggest that the problems with sexual assault prosecution in North America are dwarfed by the situation in India. Yet Saunders points out some hard-to-dispute facts: Of the 635 rape cases brought to court in New Delhi last year, only one resulted in conviction. In English-speaking countries, 40 to 70 percent of defendants charged with rape are convicted.

Of course, many rapes in the United States, Canada and England

remain unreported, and many reports never result in an arrest. But it is safe to assume that the underreporting problem is far worse in societies—including India—where a rape victim is likely to become a social outcast.

Even in the most woman-friendly culture, sexual assault cases are often complicated by difficult questions of coercion and consent. But while some societies debate whether a woman can be considered a victim if she gives in to persistent but non-forcible advances after an initial "no," others offer little recourse even to victims of physical attacks. In many places, such as Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, it is still not unusual for a victim to be pressured to marry her assailant—or to be charged with crimes against morality if she cannot prove that the sexual contact was against her will.

Of course, sexual violence is only one aspect of the mistreatment of women in many traditionalist cultures. Wife-beating is often accepted as proper punishment for a rebellious woman. There's a catastrophic lack of educational opportunities for girls and job opportunities for women. While the women of India's educated urban classes fare relatively well, those in conservative areas are not so lucky. The situation of widowed women is especially deplorable: Tradition condemns them to virtual social death, including banishment from family gatherings and a harsh dress code intended to make them unattractive.

Yet, to feminists such as McEwan, singling out non-Western cultures for critiques of misogyny is "colonialist" and "Othering." Some left-wing bloggers even chide Third World feminists for aiding "neo-colonialist" forces by confronting their countries' oppres-

over the past year in the continued expansion of water service. Through the efforts of the Water Task Force there has been a great expansion of water service and quality in the past year, and in 2013 I believe that we will achieve the goal of 24-hour service throughout the island of Saipan.

■ ■ ■

To sum up, we made some progress in 2012. Important economic factors improved a bit. We are not out of this economic recession by any means, but in 2013 we will see our economy notch up another rung. We are very focused on the basics: tourism, jobs, clarification of retirement obligations, and continued improvement in health care and utility services. The tasks we have established for 2013 are significant, and this approach contributes to the foundation for long-term sustainable growth.

Serious economic stress always causes disagreements and discord because people are hurting and discouraged. We have suffered the most serious economic harm of any place under the U.S. flag, largely due to economic forces in Japan, the U.S., and world trade conditions we had no part in shaping. As a result, our stresses have been very high. These stresses are reflected in our politics, in our connections with the federal government, and even in our dealings with one another.

The outlook for 2013 is better. Our economy can make progress in getting past this deep, deep recession. I will improve my own methods including more consultation and transparency. I know this is important to all of you, and I am determined to do better in these regards. I think we all have to realize that very divisive politics and litigation holds us back. I need to do more to accommodate my political colleagues and to make sure I communicate with our citizens. I believe we can work together very productively in 2013 despite our past differences. We live in beautiful islands, and we have a strong, generous cultural heritage. We can steady our economy and achieve progress that will benefit us all.

Thank you.

By **BEN KAMIN**

Los Angeles Times

Ben Kamin, a Reform rabbi, is the author, most recently, of Room 306: The National Story of the Lorraine Motel. He wrote this for the Los Angeles Times.



The millions of people—trembling, whispering, diverse, literate, uneducated and of many languages, journeys, dispositions and wounds—who have been performing this ritual for so many centuries add up to the possibility of a divine spark in the open air of a city that both defines and defies peace.

I spoke to an old woman as I walked up the plaza from the wall one day. Her eyes had seen more than mine ever will. She told me she had survived Treblinka. Then she wished me "Shabbat shalom" in Polish-inflected Hebrew.

Who could hear that and then require some passing rabbi to describe God for me?

By **CATHY YOUNG**

Newsday

Cathy Young is a regular contributor to Reason magazine and the website RealClearPolitics. This was written for Newsday.



sive traditions (such as forced veiling in many Muslim nations) and taking an overly positive view of women's status in the West. The condescension implicit in such critiques—often directed at women who have faced persecution and even death threats in their native countries—is staggering.

No, Western societies have not achieved a feminist paradise. Plenty of room for activism remains. But commitment to cultural diversity should not obscure the fact that, for much of the world, the West does offer a model of progress on gender issues.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Good-bye my friend Ron

During my early musical years, I have always liked the sound of the bass guitar. I even played it earlier when I was in a country band with then music leader Jesus San Nicolas where the Primo Marianas and the group the Afetnas came from. I loved the bass guitar so much it made me try to befriend some awesome bass guitarists of the time and the one that caught my attention and admiration was my nephew, Mr. Ronald S. Del Rosario.

Ronald, or Ron as we fondly called him, could slide, peg, funk and axe the bass guitar like nobody's business! He could do bass for all types of music, from rock, R&B and soul, to jazz and even Chamorro music. No wonder because he himself came from a musical family of drummers, vocalists, and combo group players.

In his final days, he would sit not far from me as we went through dialysis treatment at Dr. Aldan's St. Jude Renal Care facility where we often texted with our cell phones. I never miss a "good morning uncle" from him, as we both entered the morning shift for dialysis treatment. We would even ride the same medical transportation by Priority Care Ambulance Unit.

Ron recently passed away and to me he has left a void in our musical world. We will remember him always as the bassist who played combo with the islands' famous musicians such as Norbert Mendiola, the late Eddie Fleming and Frank Pangelinan, Candy Taman, his brothers Herbert on drums and John on rhythm and vocals.

I could not go to his funeral due to health issues that make me homebound. But I cried that Saturday, said a prayer for the surviving family members...and I said, "Good-bye my friend Ron."

Alexandro "The Colonel" Sablan
Dandan, Saipan

STATE

From Page 10

close to my heart, where we have been stymied by political and economic forces.

I readily admit that I am not without faults, and when I took this position as your governor, I resolved myself to deal with the toughest issues of the day. The key issues all involve matters where we were striving to address longstanding problems of our community. An example of this is the power plant agreement, which I entered into in order to entice the construction of a shipyard rebuilding facility. If constructed, this facility would provide at least 1,000 highly paid jobs that would revive and expand our economy. I will admit that the realization of this opportunity to significantly expand our employment base while simultaneously providing a more efficient replacement of our aged power plant inspired me to act in an expeditious manner. In retrospect there should have been more public involvement, and for this I do sincerely apologize.

After further examination by the new attorney general, Joey San Nicolas, it has been found that the prior position of his office that this contract was proper was in error. Therefore, the agreement is void and unenforceable. I apologize for the turmoil that this endeavor caused, but Attorney General San Nicolas' latest position will allow for a full examination of the merits of this proposal and the need to address the long-term power needs of our community.

There are no arguments that the current power generation system is costly and reaching the end of its life expectancy. This is why we must find alternatives to this system if we wish to lower costs and attract new industries to the CNMI. These were the two objectives I was seeking to address in this endeavor.

Before leaving this area of my report, I want to point out a significant achievement of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.

Business

AIG board weighing joining suit against US

NEW YORK (AP)—American International Group Inc. said Tuesday its board of directors will weigh whether to take part in a shareholder lawsuit against the government over its \$182 billion bailout of the insurer.

If AIG decides to join the complaint, which seeks \$25 billion in damages, it would pit the company against the government that rescued it in 2008 from collapsing under

the weight of huge losses on mortgage-backed securities and other toxic assets.

AIG said that its directors will meet Wednesday and should have a decision by the end of the month.

Starr International Co. Inc., the investment firm of former AIG CEO Maurice Greenberg, filed the lawsuit in November 2011 on behalf of the firm and AIG shareholders.

The complaint, filed in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims and the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, says that the government didn't compensate shareholders fairly when it took a nearly 80 percent stake in the insurer as part of its bailout. As a result, the government violated the Constitution, Starr claims.

AIG said that, by law, its board must consider three op-

tions: take over the lawsuit and pursue the claims on its own; attempt to prevent the claims from being pursued by Starr; or, allow Starr to continue to pursue

the complaint on AIG's behalf.

The insurer noted that, if it decides not to let Starr pursue its claims on the company's behalf, Starr would likely challenge the

move. Under that scenario, if Starr won the case, AIG would not receive any damages or portion of a potential settlement.

The Court of Federal Claims denied a request by the U.S. to dismiss the lawsuit, which means the case will go forward regardless of AIG's participation.

The government came to the rescue of AIG in September 2008, at the depths of the financial meltdown. The New York company did business with hundreds of firms around the world, and officials feared its collapse would wreck the financial system.

All told, AIG's bailout was the largest of the Wall Street rescue packages.

Since the financial meltdown, AIG has undergone a restructuring that has cut its size nearly in half. Its aim is to focus the company on its core insurance operations.

In November, AIG reported a third-quarter profit of nearly \$2 billion thanks to strength in its insurance operations and investment returns. In the same period a year earlier it lost \$4 billion.

The Treasury Department announced last month that it sold all of its remaining shares in AIG, ending up with \$22.7 billion more than it funneled to the company during the height of the financial crisis.

Shares of AIG closed Tuesday down 28 cents at \$35.65. Over the last 12 months, however, the stock is up more than 50 percent.

US consumer debt rises on more car, school loans

WASHINGTON (AP)—U.S. consumers took on more debt in November to buy cars and attend school, but stayed cautious with their credit cards.

The Federal Reserve said Tuesday that consumers increased their borrowing in November by \$16 billion from October to a seasonally adjusted record of \$2.77 trillion.

Borrowing that covers autos and student loans increased \$15.2 billion. A category that measures credit card debt rose just \$817 million.

The sharp difference in the borrowing gains illustrates a broader trend that began during the Great Recession. Four years ago, Americans carried \$1.03 trillion in credit card

debt, an all-time high. In November, that figure was 16.5 percent lower.

At the same time, student loan debt has increased dramatically. The category that includes auto and student loans is 22.8 percent higher than in July 2008. Many Americans who have lost jobs have gone back to school to get training for new careers.

The November increase also reflected further gains in auto sales, which grew 13.4 percent in 2012 to top 14 million units for the first time in five years. The need to replace vehicles destroyed by Superstorm Sandy may have also contributed to the gain.

Analysts expect the trends in borrowing to stay the same

this year. They predict small increases in credit card debt and stronger gains in auto and student loans.

Peter Newland, an economist at Barclays Research, said that modest growth and a slight easing in credit standards helped boost credit card borrowing slightly last year.

Paul Edelstein, an economist at Global Insight, said consumers seem willing to take on more debt, but slow wage growth and high unemployment should keep many household budgets tight.

The Federal Reserve's borrowing report covers auto loans, student loans and credit cards. It excludes mortgages, home equity loans and other loans tied to real estate.



People pass the AIG building, in New York, Tuesday, Jan. 8, 2013. American International Group Inc. said Tuesday its board of directors will weigh whether to take part in a shareholder lawsuit against the U.S. over the government's \$182 billion bailout of the insurer.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

UK officials charge 8 in \$55M bank corruption case

LONDON (AP)—Prosecutors say that eight people have been charged in connection with a roughly \$55 million (pound) corruption case involving what was once one of Britain's biggest banking groups. The Crown Prosecution Service said in a statement late Tuesday that police charged two former employees of the Halifax Bank of Scotland, Lynden Scourfield and Mark Dobson, with steering loans through a business consultancy in return for corrupt gifts. Three members of the consultancy—David Mills, Michael Bancroft, and John Cartright—face fraud charges. Mills, Bancroft, and Scourfield also face a charge of money laundering, as do their wives, Jacqueline Scourfield, Alison Mills, and Beverley Bancroft.

Scrutiny of 787 fire ramps up; Boeing shares fall

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Federal safety investigators intensified their scrutiny of a Monday fire aboard a Boeing 787 as concerned investors sold shares in the aircraft maker for a second day. Boeing on Tuesday confirmed that the fire aboard a Japan Airlines plane appeared to have started in a battery pack for the plane's auxiliary power unit. The National Transportation Safety

Board described the fire damage to the battery as "severe," and said it is sending two more investigators to examine the Japan Airlines plane. It also formed investigative groups to look at the plane's electrical systems as well as the fire response. Boeing has a lot riding on the 787. The long-range jet promises a smoother travel experience and is 20 percent more fuel efficient than older models. After years of delays, Boeing has now delivered 49 of the planes, with almost 800 more on order.

Dish Network makes \$5.15B bid for Clearwire

NEW YORK (AP)—Satellite TV provider Dish Network is offering to buy wireless network operator Clearwire—which agreed to sell itself to Sprint in December—for \$3.30 per share, or \$5.15 billion. Clearwire Corp. said it will discuss the unsolicited offer with Dish. However Sprint, which owns 51 percent of Clearwire, said it would have to sign off on Dish's offer and that it does not intend to do so. Under the proposed deal, Dish Network Corp. would buy about 24 percent of Clearwire's spectrum assets for \$2.2 billion, and Clearwire would build and manage a wireless network for Dish. Dish would also provide up to \$800 million in additional financing to the struggling Clearwire.

Target unveils year-round online price match

NEW YORK (AP)—Target Corp. is pledging to match prices of select online rivals year-round, a move that underscores how physical and online retailing are being meshed together.

Matching online prices is rare but expected to become more common as shoppers move increasingly online. Target, the nation's second largest discount retailer behind Wal-Mart Stores Inc., said it will match prices that customers find on identical products at top online retailers, all the time. The online list includes Amazon.com as well as the websites of Wal-Mart, Best Buy, Toys R Us and Babies R Us.

Target's move follows a similar holiday price match that began Nov. 1 and ended Dec. 16. Target is also making permanent its holiday offer of match-

ing prices of items found at its stores with those on its website. And for the first time it will include products that are out of stock on Target.com.

The moves follow a disappointing holiday shopping season for the Minneapolis-based retailer, hurt by stiffer competition from online rivals and stores like Wal-Mart that have hammered its low prices. It's also the latest step from brick-and-mortar stores to combat "showrooming"—a growing trend for customers to browse stores to check out products, and then go online to buy the same products for less.

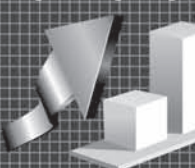
Mark Schindele, Target senior vice president of merchandising operations, noted the discount monitors prices of 30,000 items, and thousands more online, to make sure it's competitive. But

Target says it had to do more to give shoppers more confidence.

"We believe that our prices are competitive year-round," Schindele said in an interview. "We also know that our guests shop in many ways."

Many major stores have offered price matching guarantees for local competitors' brick-and-mortar stores, but it wasn't until this past holiday season that the focus was on matching online prices. Analysts believe that the trend will increase as stores are realizing they need to wake up to the increasing shift among consumers to online, which accounted for about 10 percent of holiday sales this past season. Still, such policies can be difficult in practice, because online prices tend to be lower and fluctuate often.

STOCK PORTFOLIO



LEADING INDICATORS

DOW

13,328.85
-55.44
-0.41%

S&P

1,457.15
-4.74
-0.32%

NASDAQ

3,091.81
0.00
+0.00%

EXCHANGE RATES

In U.S. dollar terms

Australian Dollar	0.9519
British Pound	0.623
Canadian Dollar	0.9872
Chinese Yuan	6.2239
Euro	0.7644

Hong Kong Dollar	7.7517
Indian Rupee	54.905
Indonesian Rupiah	9746
Japanese Yen	87.5275
Malaysian Ringgit	3.0418
New Zealand Dollar	1.1922

Philippine Peso	40.84
Singapore Dollar	1.2271
South Korean Won	1061.66
Swiss Franc	0.9242
Taiwan Dollar	29.028
Thailand Baht	30.42

Nation

\$1M donations wanted for Obama inauguration

WASHINGTON (AP)—Planners of President Barack Obama's second inauguration are soliciting high-dollar contributions up to \$1 million to help pay for the celebration in exchange for special access.

The changes are part of a continuing erosion of Obama's pledge to keep donors and special interests at arm's length of his presidency. He has abandoned the policy from his first inauguration to accept donations up to only \$50,000 from individuals, announcing last month that he would take unlimited contributions from individuals and corporations.

A fundraising appeal obtained by The Associated Press shows the Presidential Inaugural Committee is going far beyond Obama's previous self-imposed limits and is looking to blow away modern American presidential inauguration fundraising records by offering donors four VIP packages named after the country's founding fathers.

Event organizers are hoping the packages will pay for expensive events surrounding Obama's inaugural on Jan. 21. Obama raised \$53 million in private money for his first inauguration, when a record 1.8 million people packed the National Mall to see the nation's first black president take the oath of

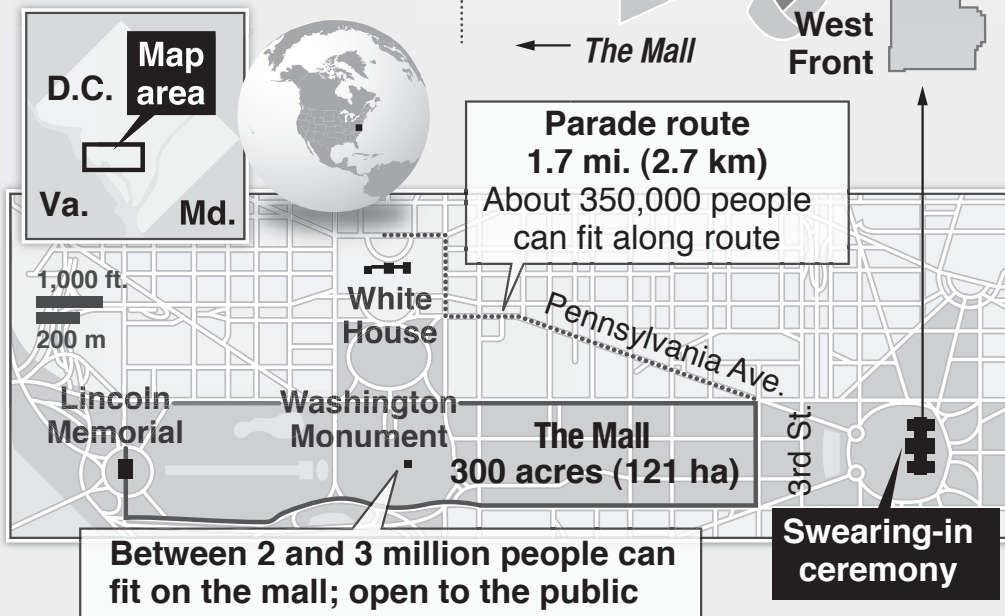
Seeing history

Where to see President Barack Obama's big moment:

Best spots

Ticket holders Get the closest in restricted area

The public Can gather on the Mall, watch swearing-in on JumboTrons



office. The celebration has been scaled down this year, with less than half the crowd expected and a cut from 10 inauguration-night balls to two.

But the pressure is high to pay for the festivities after donors already contributed to the most expensive political race in U.S. history, a campaign that exceeded \$2 billion. So far, health care executives and major Democratic Party donors—including those who've taken private meetings with Obama or his senior staff—are among those paying for the party.

The shifts underscore Obama's evolving stance on changing how business is conducted in Washington. He criticized pay-for-access privileges during his first campaign, and after coming into office he pledged to have the most transparent administration in history. The president once shunned lobbyists but later gave some waivers to work for his administration. Once a vocal opponent of super political action committees—which can spend as much money as they can raise to help candidates—Obama later embraced them when faced with the mountain of cash spent by allies of his Republican campaign challengers.

The inaugural donation pitch for top contributors promotes a standard inaugural fundraising practice of offering packages

that include tickets to balls and other events, albeit at much higher prices this time.

Donors at the "Washington" level are offered "premium partner access" for a minimum donation of \$250,000 from individuals and \$1 million from corporations. The package includes four tickets to the inaugural ball, an in-demand perk with just two being held this year on inauguration night. Inaugural planners also offered \$60 tickets for members of the general public, but they sold out quickly Sunday night. Tickets to the Commander In Chiefs Ball are free for invited members of the military and other guests.

Other perks of the Washington package include two bleacher seats to the parade, a VIP reception at a Candle Light Celebration on inauguration eve, tickets to a children's concert, co-chairs reception and a "Road Ahead" meeting featuring members of the president's finance team Saturday and tickets to a benefactors' reception to kick off the weekend.

The "Adams" package also promises premium partner access for \$150,000 from individuals and \$500,000 from corporations. It offers two tickets to the ball but not the parade bleacher seats and some other reception access.

US seared during hottest year on record by far

WASHINGTON (AP)—America set an off-the-charts heat record in 2012.

A brutal combination of a widespread drought and a mostly absent winter pushed the average annual U.S. temperature last year up to 55.32 degrees Fahrenheit, the government announced Tuesday. That's a full degree warmer than the old record set in 1998.

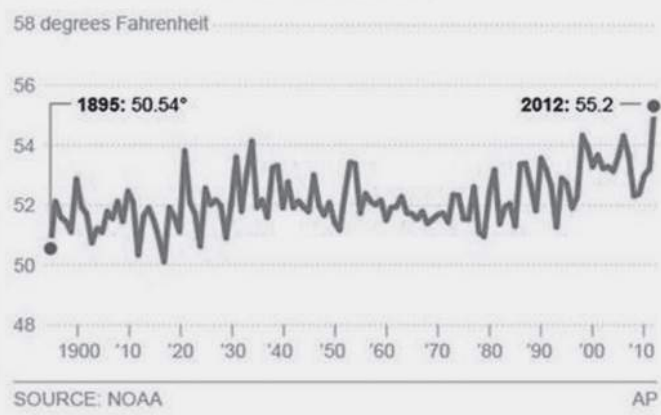
Breaking temperature records by an entire degree is unprecedented, scientists say. Normally, records are broken by a tenth of a degree or so.

"It was off the chart," said Deke Arndt, head of climate monitoring at the National Climatic Data Center in Asheville, N.C., which calculated the temperature records.

Last year, he said, will go

U.S. breaking temperature records

A brutal combination of a widespread drought and a mostly absent winter pushed the average annual U.S. temperature last year up to 55.32 degrees Fahrenheit



down as "a huge exclamation point at the end of a couple decades of warming."

The data center's figures for

the entire world won't come out until next week, but through the first 11 months of 2012, the world was on pace to have its

eight warmest year on record.

Scientists say the U.S. heat is part global warming in action and natural weather variations. The drought that struck almost two-thirds of the nation and a La Nina weather event helped push temperatures higher, along with climate change from man-made greenhouse gas emissions, said Katharine Hayhoe, director of the Climate Science Center at Texas Tech University. She said temperature increases are happening faster than scientists predicted.

"These records do not occur like this in an unchanging climate," said Kevin Trenberth, head of climate analysis at the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colo. "And they are costing many billions of dollars."

Giffords, Kelly launch gun control lobbying effort

TUCSON, Ariz. (AP)—Tuesday was not just a day for Tucson to remember the victims of the deadly shooting that severely injured then-U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords. It was also a day when residents could see firsthand the nation's gun debate play out in a busy parking lot outside a city police station.

On one side was a councilman who supports gun control leading an effort to give \$50 grocery store gift cards to any-

one who turned in their firearms to police. On the other was an event organized by a state senator that turned into an open, unregulated and legal marketplace for firearms.

"We have a fundamental hole in the private sales of guns. You can walk up right in front of a cop and buy a gun, no background check, nothing," said Councilman Steve Kozachik. "How much more flawed can the system be?"

The people who bought guns

from each other declined repeated requests for comments. The senator and gun rights advocate didn't stay at the event, but earlier said he was angered by the timing of Kozachik's event and that paying \$50 for a gun was such little money that it amounted to theft.

The dueling gun buyback programs—and the annual ringing of bells to remember the six dead and 13 injured, including Giffords, during the January 2011 attack—

came as the congresswoman and her husband announced that they were forming a political action committee aimed at preventing gun violence.

Giffords and husband Mark Kelly, a former astronaut, discussed the effort in an op-ed published in USA Today and in an interview on ABC News. The interview also provided a glimpse of Giffords' long recovery since being shot in the head two years ago.

ACROSS THE NATION

National Cathedral to perform same-sex weddings

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Washington National Cathedral, where the nation gathers to mourn tragedies and celebrate new presidents, will soon begin performing same-sex marriages. Cathedral officials tell The Associated Press the church will be among the first Episcopal congregations to implement a new rite of marriage for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender members. The church will announce its new policy Wednesday. As the nation's most prominent church, the decision carries huge symbolism. The 106-year-old cathedral has long been a spiritual center for the nation, hosting presidential inaugural services and funerals for Ronald Reagan and Gerald Ford. It draws hundreds of thousands of visitors.

Pilot who struck Bay Bridge had 3 prior accidents

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—The pilot of an empty oil tanker that crashed into the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge was involved in three previous accidents, records obtained Tuesday show. Pilot Guy Kleess was held responsible for two of the accidents and ordered to undergo more training after a ship he was piloting damaged a dock in Stockton in 2009, according to records from the state Board of Pilot Commissioners. The disclosure came as two federal agencies and the state board pursued investigations of the crash of the 752-foot tanker Overseas Reymar.

More anti-Muslim ads go up in NYC subways

NEW YORK (AP)—The group that equated Muslim radicals with savages in advertisements last year has put up another set of provocative ads in dozens of New York City subway stations. The American Freedom Defense Initiative purchased space next to 228 clocks in 39 stations for ads with an image of the burning World Trade Center and a quote attributed to the Quran saying: "Soon shall we cast terror into the hearts of the unbelievers." The Metropolitan Transportation Authority said the ads went up Monday and will run for a month.

Asia

Milder temperatures ease Australian wildfire fears

COOMA, Australia (AP)—Record temperatures across southern Australia cooled Wednesday, reducing the danger from scores of raging wildfires but likely bringing only a brief reprieve from the summer's extreme heat and fire risk.

Australia had its hottest day on record on Monday with a nationwide average of 40.33 degrees Celsius (104.59 degrees Fahrenheit), narrowly breaking a 1972 record of 40.17C (104.31F).

Tuesday was the third hottest day at 40.11C (104.20F). Four of Australia's hottest 10 days on record have been in 2013.

"There's little doubt that this is a very, very extreme heat wave event," Bureau of Meteorology manager of climate monitoring and prediction David Jones said.

"If you look at its extent, its duration, its intensity, it is arguably the most significant in Australia's history," he added.

With Wednesday's cool-down in southern Australia, the national capital, Canberra, dropped from a high of 36C (97F) on Tuesday to 28C (82F) and Sydney dropped from 43C (109F) to 23C (73F).

Jones expected that Wednesday would also rank among Australia's hottest days when the national temperatures are calculated. That's because the extreme heat has shifted from the heavier populated south to northern and central Australia.

The bureau forecast above average temperatures for the remainder of summer, compounding the fire danger created by a lack of rain across central and southern Australia over the past six months.

"It is going to be very challenging," Jones said of the wildfire danger.

No deaths have been reported, although around 100 people haven't been accounted for since last week when a fire destroyed around 90 homes in the Tasmanian town of Dunalley, east of the state capital of Hobart. On Wednesday, police spokeswoman Lisa Stingel said it's likely most of those people simply haven't checked in with officials.

"There are no reports of missing persons in circumstances that cause us to have grave fears for their safety at this time," Tasmania Police Acting Commissioner Scott Tilyard said in a statement.

Thousands of cattle and sheep as well as wildlife are suspected to have been killed.

In Victoria state, north of Tasmania, a fire injured six people, destroyed four homes and caused

the evacuation of the farming community of Carngham, Country Fire Authority operations officer Ian Morley said.

Cooler conditions on Wednesday had brought relief to firefighters who would work through the day to build earth breaks to fully contain the fire ahead of warmer temperatures forecast for Friday, Morley said.

"We have had very mild, cool conditions overnight which is a great help to the fire suppression effort," he said.

North of Victoria in New South Wales, Australia's most populous state, firefighters were battling 141 fires, including 31 that had not yet been contained.

Fires have burnt through more than 131,000 hectares (324,000 acres) of forest and farmland since Tuesday.

The Rural Fire Service has issued contradictory reports on whether a home was destroyed there.

Fires burning out of control near the towns of Cooma, Yass and Shoalhaven were the most concerning in that state.

Rural Fire Service Deputy Commissioner Rob Rogers said the cool reprieve was expected to be short-lived, with temperatures forecast to climb again by the end of the week.

"We don't need new fires today," he said.

The fires have been most devastating in Tasmania where at least 128 homes have been destroyed since Friday.

Hundreds of people remain at two evacuation centers in the state's south, as fires continue to burn more than 80,000 hectares since last week.

"People have lost everything. We can't comprehend that devastation unless we are in their shoes," Tasmanian Premier Lara Giddings said.

Dry down under

Drought has raised the fire danger in southern and eastern Australia. A major blaze has already burned homes in Tasmania.



In this aerial photo provided by the New South Wales Rural Fire Service, plumes of smoke rises from a fire near Sussex Inlet, Australia, Wednesday, Jan. 9, 2013.

Management, reporters defuse China censorship row

GUANGZHOU, China (AP)—Communist Party-backed management and rebellious editors at an influential weekly newspaper have defused a high-profile standoff over censorship that turned into a test of the new Chinese leadership's tolerance for political reform.

Under an agreement reached Tuesday, editors and reporters at the Southern Weekly will not be punished for protesting and stopping work in anger over a propaganda official's heavy-handed rewriting of a New Year's editorial last week, according to two members of the editorial staff. One, an editor, said propaganda officials will no longer directly censor content prior to publication.

The staff members asked not to be identified because they feared retaliation after they and other employees were told not to speak to foreign media. Executives at the newspaper and

its parent company, the state-owned Nanfang Media Group, declined comment other than to say the Southern Weekly would publish as normal Thursday.

Aside from getting the presses rolling, the agreement appears likely to deflate the confrontation that presented a knotty challenge to Chinese leader Xi Jinping two months after taking office. While the crisis began over the propaganda official's rewriting of the editorial calling for better constitutional governance to include praise for the party, it soon evolved into calls for free expression and political reform.

Expressions of support for the newspaper poured across the Internet and, for two days this week, protesters came by the hundreds to the gates of the compound housing the Southern Weekly. On Tuesday, supporters of the newspaper squared off against flag-waving

Communist Party loyalists near the compound off a busy street in Guangzhou, one of China's richest and most commercially vibrant cities.

Some 30 uniformed police officers stood guard outside the compound, as a handful of protesters showed up for a third day Wednesday, renewing calls for press freedom.

Defusing the crisis took the intervention of Hu Chunhua, the newly installed party chief of Guangdong, the province where Guangzhou is located, according to an editorial staff member and an academic in Beijing, who asked not to be named because officials at his university ordered him not to speak with the media.

The agreement to keep propaganda officials from censoring articles before they appear rolls back more intrusive controls put in place in recent months, but does not mean an end to censorship.

Tokyo protests to China over 4 ships near islands

TOKYO (AP)—The Japanese government summoned China's ambassador on Tuesday to protest four Chinese maritime surveillance ships that spent about 13 hours in waters near disputed islands claimed by both countries.

The uninhabited outcroppings in the East China Sea, called Senkaku in Japanese and Diaoyu in Chinese, are controlled by Japan but also claimed by China and Taiwan.

Tensions over the tiny islands intensified after Tokyo bought them from their Japanese private owners in September, prompting Chinese to hold demonstrations and boycott Japanese products.

The latest incident was the 21st and longest intrusion by Chinese vessels into what Japan considers its territorial waters around the islands since that purchase, the coast guard said.

Deputy Foreign Minister Akitaka Saiki summoned Ambassador Cheng Yonghua to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after the four Chinese government ships entered waters off the islands for about 13 hours Monday until early Tuesday, ministry official Masaru Sato said.

Asked about the reprimand during a routine briefing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei reiterated Beijing's stance that the islands are "an inherent part of Chinese

territory," and said the Chinese vessels were carrying out normal official duties.

"We do not accept Japan's protests and representations," Hong said.

"Despite China's objections, Japan sent vessels and planes to the waters and airspace of the Diaoyu Islands for many times. China made representations many times, urging Japan to stop illegal acts that violated China's sovereignty," he said.

On Dec. 13, a Chinese government airplane flew into airspace above the islands, prompting Tokyo to launch a formal protest. Beijing said the plane was conducting a normal operation.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Filipinos pack capital for Catholic procession

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Hundreds of thousands of mostly barefoot Roman Catholic devotees have joined a raucous procession of a statue of Jesus Christ being pulled through the streets of the Philippine capital. It is an annual ritual to demonstrate faith and seek miracle cures for illnesses and good life. Police estimate about 500,000 started off from Manila's Rizal Park early Wednesday for the daylong march through the city's central district. The crowd is expected to top 1 million by the time the blackened centuries-old statue, known as the Black Nazarene, is returned to its home in Quiapo Church. Devotees jostled each other to touch the statue in hopes that its mystical powers will rub off on them. The Red Cross says dozens suffered minor injuries and one was seriously hurt.

Vietnam puts 14 activists on trial for dissent

HANOI, Vietnam (AP)—Vietnam has put 14 activists on trial who are accused of carrying out activities aimed at overthrowing the Communist government amid an intensifying crackdown on dissent. Defense lawyer Tran Thu Nam said the

trial opened Tuesday in the central province of Nghe An. Verdicts are expected Wednesday. Nam said the defendants, including 12 Catholics, are accused of working with Viet Tan, or the Vietnam Reform Party, in exile in the United States to carry out "activities aimed at overthrowing the people's administration." Four could face the death penalty if convicted.

China fires 6 officials after fatal orphanage fire

BEIJING (AP)—A fire that killed six children and one young adult at an illegally run orphanage in central China has prompted the suspensions of six local officials, a county government official said Tuesday. The deaths Friday in Henan province's Lankao county have spotlighted China's lack of government-run child services. They are often left to private citizens with few resources and no legal authority. The Lankao government earlier acknowledged that it had turned a blind eye to the illegal orphanage, which cared for abandoned children and young adults. A man from the Lankao government's main office who would give only his surname, Zhao, said Tuesday that six officials were suspended, but gave no other details.

World

Iran's medical crisis deepens as economy sputters

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—For the first time in more than a decade, the black market pharmaceutical peddlers are back on Nasser Khosrow Street near Tehran's main bazaar.

"Medicine, medicine," the street dealers shout. "Any kind you want."

Business is brisk. For many Iranians, such underground channels are now the only way to get needed—or even life-

saving—drugs as Western sanctions over the country's nuclear program have indirectly limited normal supplies to hospitals and pharmacies.

But for others, even the sidewalk touts are not an option. Iran's sinking currency has more than doubled the prices of some of the imported medicines and supplies, potentially putting them out of reach for lower-income patients.

While medicine and humanitarian supplies are not blocked by the economic embargoes on Iran, the pressures are clearly evident in nearly every level of Iranian health care. It's a sign of the domino effect of sanctions on everyday life.

Restrictions on Iran's access to international banking networks mean major obstacles to pay for imported medicine and equipment—the same troubles

facing many businesses in need of shipments from abroad.

Meanwhile, the nation's slumping currency—seen as collateral damage from sanctions—has driven up prices sharply. An imported wheelchair now costs 10 times more than last fall. A blood-sugar test kit has more than doubled to 540,000 rials, or about \$18.

The black market still finds ways to get medical supplies through smuggling routes or by simply carrying shipments by hand, but the prices can be even higher than on regular shelves.

"You pay in advance and I will bring the medicine you need later," said Behzad, a street medicine dealer who

would give only his first name. "We have all sorts of medicines: European, Indian or Chinese. It depends on your budget."

The economic blows from sanctions are most acutely felt in key industries such as oil, which accounts for nearly 80 percent of Iran's foreign revenue. On Monday, the head of Iran's parliamentary budget committee, Gholam Reza Kateb, said receipts from oil and gas exports have fallen by 45 percent in the past nine months. The announcement appeared part of political early warnings before expected austerity measures in March that will likely include major tax hikes.

But Iranian authorities also

know the challenges of trying to squeeze more money from an economy showing serious signs of strain.

Cheaper Asian parts and products are increasingly taking the place of Western goods. Factories depending on imported raw materials are struggling to stay in operation. Prices for nearly everything—including health services and medicine—continue to climb as the rial stumbles along at about one-third its exchange rate value compared with 18 months ago.

"I'll decide whose turn it is," barked emergency nurse Zahra Rahmati at the state-run hospital in central Tehran, where dozens of patients clamored for attention.

US sees Iran behind hostage photos of ex-FBI agent

WASHINGTON (AP)—Two years after a hostage video and photographs of retired FBI agent Robert Levinson raised the possibility that the missing American was being held by terrorists, U.S. officials now see the government of Iran behind the images, intelligence officials told The Associated Press.

Levinson, a private investigator, disappeared in 2007 on the Iranian island of Kish. The Iranian government has repeatedly denied knowing anything about his disappearance, and the disturbing video and photos that Levinson's family received in late 2010 and early 2011 seemed to give credence to the idea.

The extraordinary photos—showing Levinson's hair wild and gray, his beard long and unkempt—are being seen for the first time publicly after the family provided copies to the AP. The video has been previously released.

In response to Iran's repeated denials, and amid secret conversations with Iran's government, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said in a statement in March 2011 that Levinson was being held somewhere in South Asia. The implication was that Levinson might be in the hands of terrorist group or criminal organization somewhere in Pakistan or Afghanistan.

The statement was a goodwill

gesture to Iran, one that the U.S. hoped would prod Tehran to help bring him home.

But nothing happened.

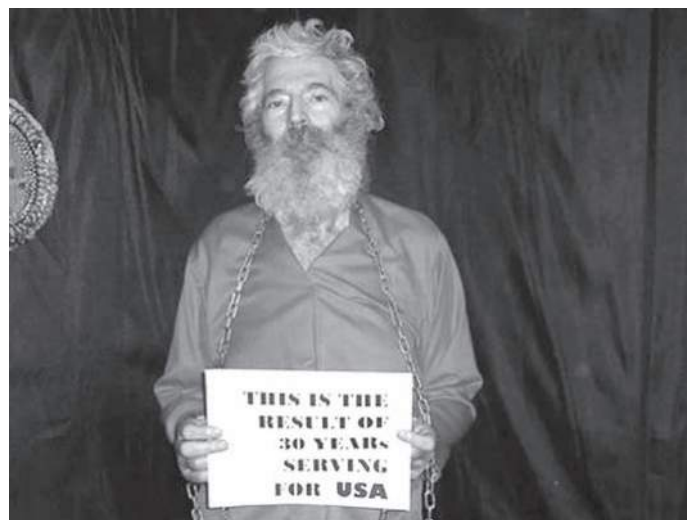
Two years later, with the investigation stalled, the consensus now among some U.S. officials involved in the case is that despite years of denials, Iran's intelligence service was almost certainly behind the 54-second video and five photographs of Levinson that were emailed anonymously to his family. The tradecraft used to send those items was too good, indicating professional spies were behind them, the officials said, speaking on the condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to talk publicly.

While everything dealing with Iran is murky, their conclusion is based on the U.S. government's best intelligence analysis.

The photos, for example, portray Levinson in an orange jumpsuit like those worn by detainees at the U.S. prison at Guantanamo Bay. The family received them via email in April 2011. In each photo, he held a sign bearing a different message.

"I am here in Guantanamo," one said. "Do you know where it is?"

Another read: "This is the result of 30 years serving for USA."



This undated handout photo provided by the family of Robert Levinson, shows retired-FBI agent Robert Levinson. Levinson, 64, went missing on the Iranian island of Kish in March 2007. Levinson's family received these photographs of him in April 2011.



In this Tuesday, Dec. 11, 2012 photo, an Iranian pharmacist arranges medicine on shelves at a pharmacy in central Tehran, Iran.

Lawyer: Tunisian suspect in Libya attack freed

TUNIS, Tunisia (AP)—Tunisian authorities released one of the only men in custody for alleged links to September's attack on the U.S. diplomatic mission in the Libyan city of Benghazi, the latest blow to an investigation that has limped along for months.

Armed groups assaulted the lightly guarded mission on Sept. 11 and killed U.S. Ambassador Christopher Stevens and three other Americans, but despite U.S. promises there has been little news of progress so far in bringing the perpetrators to justice.

Ali Harzi, a 26-year-old Tunisian extradited from Turkey in October, was one of the only people actually detained over the attack, and at the time Tunisian authorities said they "strongly suspected" he was involved.

On Tuesday, however, his lawyer Anwar Oued-Ali said the presiding judge had "conditionally freed" Harzi the night before for lack of evidence. He must remain in the Tunis area

to be available for any further questioning.

William Lawrence, the North Africa analyst for the International Crisis Group, said while it was very possible that Harzi might have been involved with extremist groups in Benghazi, it was impossible to tell without more efforts from the Libyans.

"If there had been a better investigation in Benghazi, this guy's role in the whole thing would have been a lot clearer," he said. "The fundamental issue is that the Libyans aren't prioritizing this."

Already back in December, U.S. officials were lamenting the lack of cooperation with the governments of the region, particularly Libya, in their ongoing investigation into the attack, saying most of the suspects remain free.

Mounting a coherent investigation is difficult for Libyan government—especially in Benghazi—because authorities rely on the militias who fought former leader Moammar Gadhafi and it is often difficult to

draw clear lines between those providing security and those causing the instability.

In November, the official in charge of Benghazi security was assassinated, and on Sunday the Libyan government announced that the investigator sent to look into his death was himself kidnapped.

"You've had a long series of police and militia leaders kidnapped and killed in Benghazi," noted Lawrence, explaining why neither the Libyans nor the U.S. has been able to get far in the investigation. "Benghazi is certainly a very bad place to be a police officer."

The FBI declined to comment Tuesday, and the State Department referred all questions to the FBI. "The president has committed that we will see justice in this case," State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said.

For their part, Libyan officials have remained silent on the course of the investigation in the ambassador's death, saying only that it is ongoing.

WORLD BRIEFS

Venezuela lawmakers postpone Chavez swearing-in

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)—Venezuelan lawmakers voted on Tuesday to postpone the inauguration of ailing President Hugo Chavez for his new term, prompting complaints from opponents who called it a violation of the constitution. Chavez's congressional allies, who hold a majority of seats in the National Assembly, agreed with a government proposal for Chavez to be sworn in at a later date before the Supreme Court. While pro-Chavez lawmakers approved the plan with a show of hands, opponents condemned the action as illegal. Vice President Nicolas Maduro broke the

news that Chavez would not be able to attend Thursday's scheduled inauguration in a letter to National Assembly President Diosdado Cabello, confirming suspicions that Chavez's battle with cancer and a related respiratory infection would keep him in a Cuban hospital past the key date.

Massive fire rips through slum in Nigeria megacity

LAGOS, Nigeria (AP)—A massive fire tore through a waterfront slum in Nigeria's megacity of Lagos on Tuesday, burning down dozens of shack workshops and homes. When firefighters didn't turn up, locals tried in vain to stop the blaze with buckets of water. The fire

hit along the dirty shoreline of the Lagos Lagoon, an area full of sawmills that process lumber floated into the city from hundreds of miles (kilometers) away. Massive piles of sawdust and loose shavings fill the area. By Tuesday afternoon, a thick plume of smoke rose from the mills over the city's long Third Mainland Bridge, which links the metropolis to its islands. Hours later after the sunset set, the fire still raged in the neighborhood. Silhouettes of residents could be seen, trying to toss water onto the massive flames, which stood stories high. The rest of the neighborhood remained in the dark, with little points of lights from flashlights dancing across the blackness.

Focus

By DALE GAVLAK
ASSOCIATED PRESS

ZAATARI, Jordan (AP)—A winter storm is magnifying the misery for tens of thousands of Syrians fleeing the country's civil war, turning a refugee camp into a muddy swamp where howling winds tore down tents and exposed the displaced residents to freezing temperatures.

Refugees at a camp in Zaatari, where about 50,000 are sheltered, attacked aid workers with sticks and stones after the tents collapsed in 35 mph (60 kph) winds, said Ghazi Sarhan, spokesman for the Jordanian charity that helps run the camp. Police said seven Jordanian workers were injured.

After three days of rain, muddy water engulfed tents housing refugees including pregnant women and infants. Those who didn't move out used buckets to bail out the water; others built walls of mud to try to stay dry.

Conditions in the Zaatari camp were "worse than living in Syria," said Fadi Suleiman, a 30-year-old refugee.

Most of Zaatari's residents are children under age 18 and women. They are some of the more than 280,000 Syrians who fled to Jordan since the uprising against President Bashar Assad broke out in March 2011. As the fighting has increased in recent weeks, the number of displaced has risen.

About a half-million Syrians have fled to neighboring countries including Turkey and Lebanon to escape the civil war that has killed an estimated 60,000 people in nearly two years of fighting. Wet and wintry weather across the Middle East has made conditions miserable for refugees in those countries as well—even flooding two camps in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley after a river overflowed its banks.

Several large pools of standing water—including one nearly the size of a football field and about 4 inches deep—have spread in the Zaatari camp. Children clad only in plastic sandals waded in despite the frigid water. An old woman wore plastic bags on her feet as she walked to pick up some food.

"Zaatari is sinking," said a refugee who gave his name as Abu Bilal from the southern Syrian town of Dara'a, across the border. The 21-year-old father of two toddlers said his tent has been flooded for days, and when he appealed for help, he was turned away by both the U.N. refugee agency and the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization, which administer the camp.

His family of five lives in a neighbor's cramped cloth tent, which already houses eight people.

"We're desperate. We need a solution fast," said Abu Bilal, who wore a red and white checkered scarf on his head for warmth. "People's reactions may get out of hand, especially if they see their child fall ill or even die. They could do something that nobody will be able to control or blame them for."

Like most of the refugees interviewed in the camp, Abu Bilal asked to be identified by his nickname because he feared retaliation against relatives still living in Syria.

Suleiman complained that life in the

camp was "one misery after the other as the international community sits idle, doing nothing to help us get rid of the tyrant Assad."

He worried that the winter storm was serious enough to "kill children and old people."

A woman who gave her name as Um Ahmed and whose tent was also flooded said her 9-month-old daughter died at Zaatari recently. She blamed the cold, saying the girl suffered from acute diarrhea and vomiting. Camp officials, however, have not attributed any of the deaths to the cold.

A 37-year-old refugee, who gave his name as Abu Samir, said he complained to camp authorities about the conditions—and asked if those in the flimsy tents could receive one of the 2,500 trailers donated by Saudi Arabia—but the officials only dug a drainage hole that did little to draw away the water from his and other sodden tents.

Another who called himself Abu Abdullah griped about the length of time needed to meet even the simplest needs and joked bitterly that a request for diapers for his two young sons required a signature from U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

Ali Bibi, a liaison officer with the U.N. refugee agency in Jordan, said the group was in the process of finalizing plans for distributing the Saudi trailers. But he added that the international community's financial support to Syrians—both those displaced internally and those sheltering in neighboring countries—was "less than modest" in response to a recent appeal.

Last month, the U.N. said it needed \$1 billion to aid Syrians in the region, while \$500 million was required to help refugees in Jordan. The UNHCR says 597,240 refugees have registered or are awaiting registration with the agency in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt. Some countries have higher estimates, noting many have found accommodations without registering.

"We have asked the international community to step up and support the Syrian refugees with better infrastructure, like trailers and prefabricated units, to deal with harsh winter elements," Bibi said.

Late Tuesday, Jordan's state TV reported that after a regional official visited the camp, 70 families were evacuated from tents to a different location.

The World Food Program said it is unable to help 1 million people who are going hungry inside Syria.

WFP spokeswoman Elisabeth Byrs said the agency plans to provide aid to 1.5 million of the 2.5 million Syrians that the Syrian Arab Red Crescent says are internally displaced. But the lack of security and the agency's inability to use the Syrian port of Tartus for its shipments means that a large number of people in the some of the



A Syrian refugee boy runs to his family tent at Zaatari Syrian refugee camp, near the Syrian border in Mafraq, Jordan, Tuesday, Jan. 8, 2013. Syrian refugees in a Jordanian camp attacked aid workers with sticks and stones on Tuesday, frustrated after cold, howling winds swept away their tents and torrential rains flooded muddy streets overnight. Police said seven aid workers were injured.

Winter storm brings more misery to Syrian refugees

country's hardest hit areas will not get help, she said.

"Our main partner, the Red Crescent, is overstretched and has no more capacity to expand further," Byrs said.

The stormy weather also added to the plight of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, where there have been torrential rains and flooding throughout the country. Private and public schools in Lebanon were closed Tuesday and Wednesday, when the storm was expected to be at its peak.

Two Syrian refugee encampments in Lebanon's eastern Bekaa Valley were immersed in water after the Litani River flooded. Dozens of Syrian refugees left in search of alternate shelter along with their soaked and muddy belongings.

Hiam al-Hussein, a 23-year-old from Syria's war ravaged Homs district of Baba Amr, was among a group of refugees who were sheltering in an open garage near the flooded al-Faour encampment.

"We had brought along with us a couple of mattresses, some carpets. Everything is gone now," she said, wearing a sweater, pajama pants and a pink scarf.

"God help the women and children. The river flooded last night and suddenly everything around us was swept away and swimming in water," said Abdullah Taleb, a refugee from the northern city of Aleppo who arrived in Lebanon three months ago with his wife and two children. "It's a nightmare

we are living—a nightmare."

In the eastern Lebanese town of Marj near the Syrian border, refugees reinforced flooded tents, and some were blown away in the wind and rain. The small settlement of about 40 tents donated by a Saudi charity and set up in cooperation with the UNHCR houses mostly women and children.

"You tell me, is this a life?" cried a middle-aged woman who gave her name as Ghalia. She fled with her son to Lebanon after her husband died in shelling of the Damascus neighborhood of Qaboun last year.

"We've been driven away from Syria by the war and we cannot afford rent prices in Lebanon. We have nothing but the clothes we brought with us to this tent, and now look at us!" she said as water seeped into her tent.

Imad al-Shummari, head of the al-Marj municipality, said authorities were working with the refugees to reinforce their tents and provide alternate shelter, as well as distributing heaters and extra blankets and other needs.

"We had flooding in many areas," he said.

Lebanon has about 175,000 Syrian refugees, according to U.N. figures, although the Lebanese government estimates the number at 200,000. Most are in schools and apartments, but a few are staying in tents they pitched near the Syrian border.

The cold and rainy weather also was causing problems at camps in Turkey, and tragedy struck at one site. Fire

spread through several tents at the Sulayman Shah refugee camp, killing two children and injured four other people, according to the state-run Anadolu Agency. A 5-year-old child died at the scene, while a 15-year-old died later of his injuries in a hospital.

The fire apparently was caused by the refugees' illegal use of electricity that is provided for radiators for the tents, said Deputy Prime Minister Besir Atalay.

Turkey's Disaster and Emergency Management Authority, which oversees the refugee camps, said authorities have been preparing for winter conditions since August. An official from the unit in charge of the preparations said all refugees were given winter boots, warm clothing, coats and blankets in November.

Almost all of the tents were either revamped for cold weather or replaced with ones able to withstand winter conditions, he said. All tents have heaters, according to the official who spoke on condition of anonymity because of government rules.

Despite that, Mohammed al-Abed, a 30-year-old Syrian in Turkey's Yayladagi camp, said conditions were "cold, wet and miserable."

Temperatures were close to freezing, he said, adding that the tents were equipped with heaters but that bathrooms and lavatories were about 300-500 yards (meters) away.

"Often there's a long line of people, including freezing children, waiting in the cold to use the bathrooms," he said.

"There is no hot water. People are getting sick, especially the children. There are lots of coughing, infections and people with colds," he added.

"It's a miserable situation, but I am ashamed to complain because we're much better off than our brothers trapped in Syria," he said, citing conditions at the Atmeh camp on the Syrian side of the border.

"At least we are better equipped with some heaters and blankets. They have nothing, no heating, no electricity. Nothing."

Environment

Winter treats for visiting birds

By KATHY VAN MULLEKOM
DAILY PRESS (NEWPORT NEWS, VA.)

The birds at our house thrive on a gourmet diet—pretty much year-round.

There's a meal worm feeder for bluebirds, nut feeder for woodpeckers, thistle feeder for finches, safflower feeder for cardinals and black oil sunflower seed feeder for everyone.

Overripe blueberries, chopped apples, orange wedges and banana slices are placed in a fly-through feeder, and nut- and fruit-enhanced suet goes out when the temperatures drop into the 30s. All feeders are caged or baffled to prevent rude raiders like squirrels and raccoons.

This time of year, the birds depend on the feeders because most natural seeds, berries and insects are gone.

Mealworms, which used to be icky to handle and keep because they were alive, now come in easy-use, freeze-dried form. Mix mealworms in with seed



Mealworms provide bluebirds and other species extra protein throughout the year, especially in winter when natural food sources are slim. MCT

Dumped Christmas trees are a gift for man-made lake's fish

By MIKE ANTON
LOS ANGELES TIMES

The ghosts of Christmas past can be found in some unusual places. The bottom of Lake Havasu, for instance.

There, thousands of Christmas trees sunk by wildlife biologists have found a second life as fish habitat in an ecosystem damaged by the damming of the Colorado River decades ago.

What nature once provided—a steady source of organic material such as brush and uprooted trees—disappeared when the once wild and muddy river was tamed. The lake is a reservoir behind Parker Dam on the California border with Arizona.

By the late 1980s, Lake Havasu's now crystal clear waters harbored few places where newly spawned fish could find shelter from predators. Fish populations were a fraction of what they had been

a generation before.

"There was no place for the young fish to hide until they matured," said Kirk Koch, a fisheries program manager for the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. "Instead, they would be consumed by bigger fish."

The solution was a gift that keeps on giving: Christmas trees.

More than 30 million farm-harvested trees are sold nationwide each year. No matter how pretty they are decorated, they all meet the same ignoble fate: ground up as mulch or buried in landfills.

When it began in 1992, the effort at Lake Havasu was the largest fresh-water habitat recovery program in the nation, Koch said.

Over the next decade, \$16 million and countless hours of work by volunteers created 875 acres of artificial reefs.

Structures were formed by

sinking PVC pipe, concrete sewer pipe and cinder blocks in 42 coves. Then, discarded Christmas trees were lashed together, weighted down and dumped around the structures. Piles of brush were added.

As the trees and brush decomposed, the pipe and concrete structure grew a biological skin of mosses and algae that was then colonized by insects. In addition to providing shelter, the Christmas tree structures also became a source of fish food.

Scuba divers check sites annually and have found that fish are drawn to Christmas trees as much as Santa is.

"When they started, they could count all of the fish at any spot on their fingers," Koch said. "Progressively, they found more fish—way, way more fish—than they can count."

The project turned Lake Havasu into a popular sport fishing destination.

"Before this, the lake was basically dead," said Arnold Vignoni, president of the local chapter of Anglers United, whose members help maintain the reefs. "The bass tournament guys—and we have lots of bass tournaments here now—say the fishing is just outstanding."

It takes a Christmas tree five to six years to decompose under water. So each year, volunteers toss in as many as 500 additional trees and a thousand brush piles to replenish the reefs.

Part of the benefit of creating habitat with Christmas trees is that it's cheap—trash haulers are happy to unload onto others what they pick up at the curb.

This year, Riverside County supervisors approved a plan to transfer 2 tons of trees collected at county landfills to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, which will dump them into two lakes that badly need them.

EPA updates rule for pathogens in drinking water

» Agency sets limit for E. coli

WASHINGTON—The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has updated the rule for pathogens in drinking water, including setting a limit for the bacteria E. coli to better protect public health.

The Revised Total Coliform Rule ensures that all of the approximately 155,000 public water systems in the United States, which provide drinking water to more than 310 million people, take steps to prevent exposure to pathogens like E. coli. Pathogens like E. coli can cause

a variety of illnesses with symptoms such as acute abdominal discomfort or, in more extreme cases, kidney failure or hepatitis.

Under the revised rule, public drinking water systems are required to notify the public if a test exceeds the maximum contaminant level (MCL) for E. coli in drinking water. If E. coli or other indications of drinking water contamination are detected above a certain level, drinking water facilities must assess the system and fix potential sources and pathways of contamination. High-risk drinking water systems with a history of

non-compliance must perform more frequent monitoring. The revised rule provides incentives for small drinking water systems that consistently meet certain measures of water quality and system performance.

Public water systems and the state and local agencies that oversee them must comply with the requirements of the Revised Total Coliform Rule beginning April 1, 2016. Until then, public water systems and primacy agencies must continue to comply with the 1989 version of the rule.

The Safe Drinking Water Act requires that EPA review

each National Primary Drinking Water Regulation, such as the Total Coliform Rule, at least once every six years. The outcome of the review of the 1989 Total Coliform Rule determined that there was an opportunity to reduce implementation burden and improve rule effectiveness while at the same time increasing public health protection against pathogens in the drinking water distribution systems. EPA's revised rule incorporates recommendations from a federal advisory committee comprised of a broad range of stakeholders and considers public comments received during a public comment period held in fall 2010. (EPA)

to provide extra protein. Mealworms are available at wildlife and garden specialty centers, as well as Lowe's stores.

"With a little preparation and the right blend of food, water and shelter, you can fill your back yard with the bright colors and welcome song of birds all season—and give your feathered friends the help they need to thrive throughout the year," says Elaine Cole, owner of Cole's wild bird products, sold nationwide, www.coleswildbird.com.

For extras during winter, create decorative edibles for the birds. Large pine cones can be smothered in peanut butter, rolled in birdseed and then hung via twine on evergreens at the edge of your deck or yard. Suet mixed with raisins and seed can be stuffed into pine cones and hung. You can see a tutorial of this on the new mobile app TutoriALL, available free for download at app stores.

Stale bread and bagel halves

can be done the same way. Toast the bread, smear on peanut butter, spoon on birdseed and add a ribbon, yarn or twine hanger.

Cookie cutters can be used to make special shapes such as hearts, stars and such.

Or, smear an empty toilet paper roll with peanut butter, roll it in birdseed and slip it onto a tree branch for birds to enjoy.

"You really keep it simple when you use toppings of wild bird seed on medium-sized scoops of chunky peanut butter and place them outdoors on tree trunks and branches," says Cole.

Suet bags for birds can be made from pieces of suet from the butcher, slip them into a red mesh onion bag, or place a suet cake in the bag and hang with red ribbon. A cardboard egg carton can be transformed into a feeder, according to the National Wildlife Federations—nwf.org/Kids/Family-Fun/crafts/homemade-suet-feeder.aspx

DO YOUR PART

New Year's resolutions you can't afford to break

By TERRI BENNETT
MCT INFORMATION SERVICES

Lots of us have a list of things we will resolve to do in the New Year. It could be getting healthier, more organized, giving back to our communities, or saving money. Do Your Part and see how going green in 2013 will help you accomplish all of the above. Here are my New Year's resolutions you can't afford to break.

COMMIT TO CLEANER AIR AT HOME

Did you know that the air inside your home is usually much more polluted than the air outside? The easiest way to clean it up is to make or buy safer household cleaners. Swap out chemical based ones for much more economical natural cleaners such as white vinegar, baking soda, and borax. Check out all my green cleaning recipes at DoYourPart.com/Columns. Some conventional cleaners contain volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that give off unhealthy gas that can linger in the air for years. Other sources of VOCs include certain paints, carpets, and some pressed wood furniture pieces. Look for low or no-VOC labels and investigate how your flooring and furniture are made.

TURN ELECTRONIC WASTE INTO CASH

You know what usually comes with the holidays—new phones, new computers, and new tablets. So what do you do with old? The last thing is to trash it where it can sit for generations and leak dangerous metals into the environment. There are many online websites that make it easy to get money or gift cards for those

unwanted electronics. Check out Ebay's Instant Sale program, NextWorth.com or Gazzelle.com to get instant quotes for your particular device. Another option for computer equipment is to donate to Goodwill's Re-Connect Program. Goodwill and Dell work together to responsibly recycle or refurbish all brands of computer equipment. The money generated goes to job training and employment opportunities for people in your community. And if you prefer to donate a cell phone, consider www.cell-phonesforsoldiers.com.

GET ORGANIZED AND GIVE BACK

Why wait until the end of 2013 to make donations or volunteer your time in the community? As holidays and birthdays take place, take time to get more life out of your old items. It could be donating outgrown clothes and toys to shelters or other community organizations. And there are plenty of other ways to give back to your neighborhood and town. Starting a community garden, investing in local businesses, and volunteering for environmental clean up opportunities are all effective options.

This year, don't let your resolutions go to waste. Instead, Do Your Part to have your family living better, clean up your environment, and give back to the community where you live. Here's to a happy and healthy 2013!

Terri Bennett is a veteran TV meteorologist, eco-expert and author of Do Your Part: A practical guide for everyday green living available at DoYourPart.com. Send questions to terri@doyourpart.com.

Life & Style

Fox: Passion, disagreements with new 'Idol' team

PASADENA, California (AP)—Five minutes into their season-opening news conference and the new team at "American Idol" were having their first disagreement—about their disagreements. Then Mariah Carey and Nicki Minaj kept it going.

"We're professionals. Have you ever had an argument with someone you've worked with?" Minaj said after repeated questions Tuesday about her reported feud with new fellow judge Carey.

"This was sort of one-sided," interjected Carey, wearing a queenly smile.

"No, it wasn't," snapped back Minaj.

Fox network executive Mike Darnell was asked by reporters with the Television Critics Association if the clash was authentic. He said there was a lot of musical passion within the group, which also includes country star Keith Urban and returning judge Randy Jackson, and that triggered disagreements.

"The fighting is what it is," Carey said at one point. "This is 'American Idol.' It's bigger than all that. It's bigger



From left, Mariah Carey, Keith Urban, Nicki Minaj and Ryan Seacrest from "American Idol" attend the Fox Winter TCA Tour at the Langham Huntington Hotel on Tuesday, Jan. 8, 2013, in Pasadena, Calif.

AP

NBC's hit "The Voice." All the shows are down in the ratings, Darnell noted.

Veteran executive producer Nigel Lythgoe is used to hearing the query. Famous judges have the pre-debut spotlight and media attention but the contestants ultimately are what keep viewers watching, he said after the panel.

That's not to say the panel isn't key, said Trish Kinane, another executive producer.

"We wanted judges who were experts and had a right to be here, and we also wanted honesty," she said. "We very much took that into consideration. I think we've got it. They're not shrinking violets, they say what they think, and we encourage that."

Minaj displayed that Tuesday, saying firmly that "Idol" is not the show for rap, her own genre.

"If you're looking for people to believe you and feed you as a rapper, I wouldn't do it," said Minaj, adding that viewers love "American Idol" as an "honest singing competition, and I'm not here to change that."

Spielberg earns 11th Directors Guild nomination

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Steven Spielberg has extended his domination at the Directors Guild of America Awards, earning his 11th film nomination Tuesday for his Civil War epic "Lincoln."

Also nominated were past winners Kathryn Bigelow for her Osama bin Laden thriller "Zero Dark Thirty"; Tom Hooper for his musical "Les Misérables"; and Ang Lee for his lost-at-sea story "Life of Pi." Rounding out the lineup is first-time nominee Ben Affleck for his Iran hostage crisis tale "Argo."

The Directors Guild field is one of Hollywood's most accurate forecasts for who will be in the running at the Academy Awards, whose nominations come out Thursday. The winner at the Directors Guild almost always goes on to win the directing prize at the Oscars. Only six times in the 64-year history of the guild awards has the winner there failed to follow up with an Oscar.

Spielberg has won the Directors Guild feature film prize a record three times, for "The Color Purple," "Schindler's List" and "Saving Private Ryan," along with directing Oscars for the latter two. He received the guild's lifetime achievement award in 2000.

Bigelow became the first

than some stupid trumped-up thing."

Reports that the two divas were at odds surfaced last fall.

woman to win the guild honor and the directing Oscar three years ago for "The Hurt Locker." Hooper won the same prize a year later for "The King's Speech," while Lee is a two-time guild winner for "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" and "Brokeback Mountain," the latter also earning him the directing Oscar.



Spielberg

Affleck, who also stars in "Argo," follows such actors-turned-filmmakers as Clint Eastwood, Kevin Costner and Mel Gibson to earn a Directors Guild nomination.

Overlooked by the guild were past nominees Quentin Tarantino for his slave revenge tale "Django Unchained" and David O. Russell for his oddball romance "Silver Linings Playbook."

No clear front-runner has emerged yet for the Feb. 24 Oscars, with "Lincoln," "Zero Dark Thirty" and "Les Misérables" all considered strong prospects to take home Hollywood's highest honor.

Winners for the 65th annual Directors Guild awards will be announced Feb. 2, with Kelsey Grammer as host.

Milos Forman, director of "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" and "Amadeus," will receive the guild's lifetime achievement award.

On "The View," Barbara Walters recounted a phone conversation with Carey in which the pop star said that Minaj threatened to shoot her after a taping. The rapper quickly responded with dismissive tweets.

Trumped up or not, she and Minaj appeared on the panel with Urban carefully placed between them and indulged in

their briefly testy "one-sided" exchange. But they also responded to a request to say something nice about each other.

Minaj called Carey one of her favorite all-time artists who has shaped a generation of singers. In return, Carey fondly recalled working with Minaj on a single titled—

"ironically," as Carey noted—"Up Out My Face."

"I knew she was going to go far, and still is," Carey said.

"American Idol" begins its 12th season Wednesday facing questions once again about its ability to endure as a top-rated show, especially given the increasingly crowded talent show landscape that includes

Oprah to interview Lance Armstrong

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Lance Armstrong has agreed to a tell-all interview with Oprah Winfrey where he will address allegations that he used performance-enhancing drugs during his cycling career.

According to a release posted on Oprah's website on Tuesday, it's the first interview with Armstrong since his athletic career crumbled under the weight of a massive report by USADA detailing allegations of drug use by the famous cyclist and teammates on his U.S. Postal Service teams.

It's unclear if the interview at Armstrong's home in Austin, Texas, has already been taped. Nicole Nichols, a spokeswoman for Oprah Winfrey Network & Harpo Studios, declined comment.

The show will air at 9 p.m. EST on Jan. 17 on OWN and Oprah.com.

Armstrong has strongly denied the doping charges that led to him being stripped of his seven Tour de France titles, but *The New York Times* reported Friday he has told associates he is considering admitting the use of PEDS.



This combination image made of file photos shows Lance Armstrong, left, on Oct. 7, 2012, and Oprah Winfrey, right, on March 9, 2012.

AP

The newspaper report cited anonymous sources, and Armstrong attorney Tim Herman told The Associated Press that night that he had no knowledge of Armstrong considering a confession.

Earlier Tuesday, "60 Minutes Sports" reported the head of the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency told the show a rep-

resentative for Armstrong offered the agency a "donation" in excess of \$150,000 several years before an investigation by the organization led to the loss of Armstrong's Tour de France titles.

In an interview for the premiere airing on Showtime on Wednesday night, USADA CEO Travis Tygart said he was

"stunned" when he received the offer in 2004.

"It was a clear conflict of interest for USADA," Tygart said. "We had no hesitation in rejecting that offer."

Herman denied such an offer was made.

"No truth to that story," Herman wrote Tuesday in an email to the AP. "First Lance heard of it was today. He never made any such contribution or suggestion."

Tygart was traveling and did not respond to requests from the AP for comment. USADA spokeswoman Annie Skinner said Tygart's comments from the interview were accurate. In it, he reiterates what he told the AP last fall: That he was surprised when federal investigators abruptly shut down their two-year probe into Armstrong and his business dealings, then refused to share any of the evidence they had gathered.

"You'll have to ask the feds why they shut down," Tygart told the AP. "They enforce federal criminal laws. We enforce sports anti-doping violations. They're totally separate. We've done our job."

'Twilight' finale leads Razzies worst-of list

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The "Twilight" finale had better reviews than the franchise's previous four movies, but you'd never know it from the Razzie nominations singling out Hollywood's worst of the year.

"The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn—Part 2" led the Razzies lineup Tuesday night with 11 nominations, including worst picture, lead-acting slots for Kristen Stewart and Robert Pattinson, and supporting-acting nominations for Taylor Lautner and Ashley Greene.

Other worst-picture nominees are the naval action tale "Battle-ship," the family flick "The Oogieloves in the Big Balloon Adventure," Adam Sandler's raunchy dud "That's My Boy" and Eddie Murphy's comedy flop "A Thousand Words."

A spoof of the Academy



This undated publicity photo released by Summit Entertainment shows, from left, Judith Shekoni, Tracey Heggins, Kristen Stewart, Robert Pattinson, Christian Camargo, Peter Facinelli and Casey LaBow in a scene from the film, "The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn - Part 2."

Awards, the Razzies announce- ment comes a little more than a

day before the Oscar nomina- tions. Razzie winners will be

announced Feb. 23, the night before the Oscar ceremony.

A chemistry class for actor Kevin Bacon



In this May 14, 2012 file photo, "The Following" cast members Kevin Bacon, left, and James Purefoy attend the FOX network upfront presentation party at Wollman Rink, in New York.

PASADENA, California (AP)—Things are getting a little steamy among the stars of Fox's

new thriller, "The Following." The series, which debuts on Jan. 21, features Kevin

Bacon as an investigator pursuing a serial killer portrayed by James Purefoy. At a news conference Tuesday, a reporter noted that the actors had good chemistry together. She said her reaction to watching them

perform was, quote, "I just want them to kiss."

The two actors barely paused. Bacon reached over and planted a kiss on Purefoy's cheek.

Purefoy said, "Rule nothing in, rule nothing out."

Pop star Rain disciplined for meeting with actress

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korea's Defense Ministry has decided to confine pop star Rain to his base for a week for meeting with an actress while on duty.

The penalty is the lightest a South Korean soldier can face. Paparazzi photos recently showed Rain with actress Kim Tae-hee when he wasn't allowed to have private meetings while outside his base for official duties such as recording and performing.



Rain

Rain is fulfilling his two-year mandatory military service as an "entertainment soldier." His meetings with Kim raised suspi-

cions that the military was coddling popular entertainers with special favors because they help enhance its image. Officials deny it.

Rain has starred in the Hollywood films "Speed Racer" and "Ninja Assassin." Time magazine named him one of the world's 100 most influential people in 2011.

Readers urge wife to work through problems at home

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



DEAR ABBY: This is in response to "Had It in Hartford" (Oct. 6), who has been unhappily married to her husband for 20 years. She said she married him for all the wrong reasons and "has never loved him the way a woman should love a man."

After I had been married for seven years, I went to my pastor concerned that the grass on the other side was looking greener than mine. As we spoke, I began to realize the extent of the investment I had put into my marriage and that I didn't want to start over again on a new one.

My mom always told me, "Marriage is not easy. You will always have to work on it. There will be times when you won't feel that you like him or love him." I have been married for 36 years now. Do I notice handsome men, or appreciate a man who treats me kindly? Of course. I'm not blind or dead.

Love isn't just a feeling, but a choice and a commitment. I'm committed to my husband not because I'm "supposed" to be, but because I CHOOSE to be. It seems to me that "Had It" never made that choice or worked toward it, but expected it to just happen eventually.

She has a foundation of trust and friendship that helps a marriage through the rough times. Many marriages that end in divorce rely on sexual attraction and passion to carry them instead of friendship.

We're told that marriage is 50-50. That's not true. It's 100-100. I'm responsible for my 100 percent, and my spouse is responsible for his.

"Had It" should take another look at what she's about to lose and tally up the costs to her family. Is she really trapped? Or has she just been unwilling to choose to love?

BARBARA IN MOUNT VERNON, WASH.

DEAR BARBARA: Thank you for writing. I advised "Had It" to think long and hard before leaving her husband, but that if she truly cannot love him the way he deserves, she should move on. My readers' comments:

DEAR ABBY: "Had It" doesn't feel love toward her husband because she spends her time and energy ruminating about a "mistake" she thinks she made 20 years ago. She says he is doing everything right and they get along fine. If she tried something positive, like reminding herself about the qualities she likes about him, and doing things she knows make him happy instead of fantasizing about other men, she might find the love she craves in her marriage.

Loving feelings come from loving behavior, not the other way around. The sooner she realizes this, the sooner she'll see that what she really wants is right there at home with her family. And it has been there all along.

DR. PEGGY B.

DEAR ABBY: I have this message for "Had It": I felt like you and acted on my feelings. Don't do it! Wait until your kids are older. As much as you want a more intimate relationship, you cannot begin to imagine the impact straying will have on your kids.

I deeply regret what I did and I wish someone would have told me what I'm telling you. Pull yourself together. Think about your children, extended family and friends. You are connected to others through your husband, and once you pull your marriage apart, everything else falls away, too.

REGRETTING IT IN NEW YORK

DEAR ABBY: "Had It" is probably suffering from a case of the seven-year itch. For some reason, people cycle in seven-year increments. Some of them change jobs or homes, others have affairs or change spouses. She should work through it with a counselor.

There is a lot to be said for being married to your best friend. A wise therapist advised me to compliment my husband at least once a day. ("If you act happy, pretty soon it won't be an act.") This was after my first bout with the "itch" and it has been working ever since, 29 years!

LOVING AND LAUGHING WITH MY BEST FRIEND

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

ENTERTAINMENT TIDBITS

Longoria to host Latino inaugural salute to Obama

WASHINGTON (AP)—Following an election where Latinos showed their growing political influence, a coalition of groups is coordinating a gathering of top Latino entertainers at the Kennedy Center in a series of events ahead of President Barack Obama's inauguration. Eva Longoria, George Lopez, Mario Lopez and Rita Moreno are among a group of prominent performers who will gather on Jan. 20 for "Latino Inaugural 2013: In Performance at the Kennedy Center." Details of the tribute performance were announced Tuesday. Longoria, a co-chair of Obama's inauguration festivities, is hosting the event. The Latino inaugural gathering is driven in part by organizers of The Futuro Fund, which helped mobilize Latino support for the Obama-Biden re-election. The

Kennedy Center is presenting the event free of charge in two of its large theaters.

Ray Romano loves his 'Parenthood' role

NEW YORK (AP)—Fans of "Parenthood" love Ray Romano. The former star of "Everybody Loves Raymond" is appearing on NBC's "Parenthood" in a multi-episode arc as a photographer involved with Lauren Graham's character. He's hoping the love lasts a little longer. Romano told The Associated Press on Tuesday he shot his last episode for season four and if the show gets a fifth season, he'd consider coming back. "As long as they have a good idea for my character, I'd be happy to do it," Romano said. Romano told show runner Jason Katims he was a fan of the show and joked that since his series, "Men of a Certain Age" was canceled he was "unemployed and would

work cheap." This season concludes Jan. 22. No word on if it's been renewed.

Bill Taylor to be awarded John A. Bonner Medal

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Visual effects supervisor Bill Taylor is being honored by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The academy says Taylor will be awarded the John A. Bonner Medal of Commendation at the Scientific and Technical Awards banquet Feb. 9 at the Beverly Hills Hotel. The John A. Bonner Medal is named in honor of the late director of special projects at Warner Hollywood Studios. It's awarded for outstanding service and dedication in upholding the high standards of the motion picture academy. Taylor's visual effects credits include such films as "Lawless," "Public Enemies," "Milk" and "Bruce Almighty." Portions of the Scientific and Technical

Awards presentations will be included in the Academy Awards broadcast on Feb. 24.

Luke Bryan to join Blake Shelton as ACMs co-host

NASHVILLE, Tennessee (AP)—Luke Bryan is joining Blake Shelton to co-host the 2013 Academy of Country Music Awards. The Academy also says in a Tuesday news release that this year's show will be held April 7 and Brad Paisley will host the ACM Fan Jam, a satellite event held simultaneously with the awards show. Bryan replaces Reba McEntire. She served as host for more than a decade before stepping aside to concentrate on her new sitcom "Malibu Country." Shelton is also a star on "The Voice" and began sharing hosting duties with McEntire two years ago. This will be Bryan's first gig hosting a live event. The 48th annual ACM Awards will be broadcast live on CBS from the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

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George scores 29 to lead Pacers over Heat



INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Paul George made no attempt to downplay the importance of his matchup with LeBron James.

"It's a chance for me to see where I'm at, going against one of the best, if not, the best in the league," George said. "Another challenge to myself to go at LeBron. I definitely wanted to battle him."

George rose to the occasion with 29 points and 11 rebounds, and the Pacers held Miami to a season-low point total in an 87-77 win over the Heat on Tuesday night.

George has moved from shooting guard to small forward and has become a primary scoring option with Danny Granger, Indiana's leading scorer last season, out all season because of a left knee injury.

Indiana's 22-year-old forward has earned James' respect for the way he has handled his new responsibilities.

"I see him playing with a lot of confidence and a lot of opportunities," James said. "The simple fact that Danny Granger is hurt has created this opportunity for him to show what he can do. He's doing everything. He was a good player last year, but we weren't able to see it because he wasn't a featured player."

David West added 14 points and 11 rebounds, and Lance Stephenson chipped in with 13 points for the Pacers (21-14), who have won 11 of their last 14 games.

Dwyane Wade scored 30 points and James had 22 points and 10 rebounds for Miami (23-10), which still has the best record in the Eastern Conference. It was the first time the teams had met since Miami beat the Pacers in six games in the conference semifinals last year.

The Pacers outrebounded the Heat 55-36 to help make up for 36 percent shooting.

"That was a big emphasis tonight," George said. "Miami is a team that, for as good as they are, they struggle with rebounding. We knew that coming in. We knew that we had to get the boards. And we're bigger. We're a big team."

George had gone 8 for 29 in his previous two games, but he broke out of his slump by making 12 of 27 shots against Miami.

Miami entered the game leading the NBA in field goal percentage, while Indiana led the league in field goal percentage defense. The matchup resulted in the Heat scoring only 35 points in the second half, their lowest-scoring half of the season.

"Offensively, we did not have a very fluid game on that side of the court," Miami coach Erik Spoelstra said. "I'll have to take care of that tomorrow."

Indiana led 38-28 in the second quarter before the Heat rallied late in the half. Wade hit a 3-pointer to cut Indiana's lead to 38-37, and a putback by James gave the Heat the lead. The teams were tied at 42 at halftime. Wade scored 23 points in the first half, including 16 in the second quarter.

The Heat found their offensive flow in the early minutes of the second half. A 3-pointer by Mario Chalmers gave the Heat a 51-44 lead and caused the Pacers to call a timeout, but Indiana rallied. Stephenson found West in the corner for a 3-pointer, then Stephenson made a 3-pointer to give the Pacers a 55-53 lead.



Indiana Pacers' Paul George (24) is fouled by Miami Heat's Dwyane Wade (3) as he goes for a shot during the second half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, Jan. 8, 2013, in Indianapolis.

Bucks coach Scott Skiles out, Boylan to fill in

MILWAUKEE (AP)—Once again, an NBA team has parted ways with head coach Scott Skiles. Once again, veteran assistant Jim Boylan is being asked to pick up the pieces.

One day after Milwaukee and Skiles agreed it was time for a change, the Bucks said Tuesday that Boylan will coach the team for the rest of the season. General manager John Hammond downplayed the notion that Skiles had lost control of the locker room or otherwise felt friction with management.

"Scott and I did not have a frosty relationship. Scott did not hate this team," said Hammond, who noted that more than half the season remains. "We're not a team in dire straits... we're expecting good things to happen."

Boylan met with reporters before Tuesday night's home game against Phoenix.

"We'll do what we've been doing as far as being professional, getting ourselves ready for every game and getting out there and competing," Boylan said. "That's my job right now, to get us back on the right track, move us in the right direction and I think the guys we have on the team right now are quality people and committed to that task. That'll be our ultimate goal."

If this change sounds familiar, it should: Skiles was fired as head coach in Chicago on Christmas Eve in 2007 after the Bulls started 9-16. Boylan, an assistant in Chicago, took over and went 24-32. He was fired at the end of the season.

George made consecutive 3-pointers to make it 67-57 at the end of the quarter. The Pacers made 5 of 8 from 3-point range in the period. Miami scored just 15 points on 7-for-18 shooting in the third and Wade went scoreless.

George opened the fourth with a jumper over James to expand Indiana's lead to 12, and Ian Mahinmi's putback

In an interview Tuesday with the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Skiles disputed the notion that he didn't like his team.

"There's always the normal coach-player friction that goes on," Skiles said in the Journal Sentinel interview. "Guys at this level are great players. This is, as NBA teams go, this is a good group of guys."

Hammond said he and Skiles had been having a number of conversations recently about the future of the team. He said there was no single factor in Skiles' departure, and that no other assistant coaches were leaving.

"It was a mutual decision. We both agreed to make this decision," he said.

Skiles had a 162-182 record in four-plus seasons with Milwaukee, with one playoff appearance—a first-round loss to Atlanta in seven games during the 2009-10 season. He was a hard-nosed, defensive-minded coach who sometimes seemed to have difficulty meshing with a roster built around volume shooters Brandon Jennings and Monta Ellis.

Jennings said he heard about the change in a phone call Monday night from Skiles and not from anyone within the organization.

"I think that's why I was a little bit frustrated at first," he said. "Just the fact that I had to hear it from my own coach and not the team. If I'm supposed to be their franchise player, why don't I hear the news first?"

Jennings said he was shocked but not upset about the change. He said

bumped it to 14.

Another 3 by George made it 77-60 with about 8 minutes to go, and the Pacers remained comfortably ahead the rest of the way.

Wade scored just seven points on 1-for-4 shooting in the second half. George said Stephenson deserved credit for bothering Wade.

"He made it hard for him in the sec-

he spoke with Skiles for about 20 minutes.

"We had our ups and downs, we had great times here," he said. "I have nothing but respect for him because as a rookie he did put the ball in my hands first."

Luc Mbah a Moute said he was shocked and had a great experience playing for Skiles, but coaching changes simply were part of the business of the NBA.

"I kind of had an idea of hearing that the team wasn't really happy with the way everything was going, and not just this year, you know the last couple of years with Skiles," he said. "This year we were kind of like started a good start and then went through a patch where we didn't play so great."

Boylan said the initial change he would make was to insert forward Ersan Ilyasova into the starting lineup for Ekpe Udoh.

Ilyasova re-signed with the Bucks during the summer, but saw his minutes decrease to 22 per game this year after playing 27 in the 2011-12 season. He said he was looking forward to playing for Boylan.

"For me, it's not a big deal you know, if you start or not, my concern has been about the minutes," Ilyasova said. "When you come from the season I had last year, I didn't expect to play less than last year."

Skiles' agent, Keith Glass, said it was hard to pinpoint when Skiles began thinking of stepping aside, but all parties agreed the timing was right.

ond half," George said. "Everybody was locked in to his drive and tried to contest all his shots."

The Pacers were subdued in the locker room after the game, perhaps a sign that they have come to expect such victories.

"We can't overreact to this," West said. "We're just happy to get a win. That's a good basketball team."

Bucks 108, Suns 99

In Milwaukee, Brandon Jennings scored 29 points and Milwaukee gave Jim Boylan a win in his first game as coach with a victory over Phoenix.

The Bucks parted ways with coach Scott Skiles on Monday in what was called a mutual decision, and the Bucks tapped Skiles' top assistant Boylan as a replacement. This is the second time Boylan has succeeded Skiles midseason. He took over the Bulls when Skiles was fired on Christmas Eve in 2007.

The Suns were a perfect opponent, playing poorly in the last few weeks with nine losses in the last 10 games overall to go with a nine-game losing streak on the road.

Goran Dragic scored 21 points and Jared Dudley added 18 for Phoenix.

Rockets 125, Lakers 112

In Houston, James Harden scored 31 points and Chandler Parsons added 20 to help Houston win its fifth straight with a victory over short-handed Los Angeles.

Houston trailed by as many as 14 in the first half, but used a pair of runs in the third quarter to go on top and build a big lead.

Metta World Peace had a season-high 24 points for the Lakers, who were playing without their top three big men: Dwight Howard, Pau Gasol and Jordan Hill—all out with injuries. Kobe Bryant added 20 for the Lakers and Steve Nash had 16 as they tied a season high with their fourth straight loss.

The Rockets have rallied from double-digit deficits for their last three wins.

Nets 109, 76ers 89

In Philadelphia, Reggie Evans had a career-high 23 rebounds, Deron Williams scored 22 points and Brooklyn improved to 6-1 under interim coach P.J. Carlesimo with a win over Philadelphia.

Evans outrebounded the undersized Sixers 23-22 through three quarters.

Andray Blatche scored 20 points for the Nets, hours after he was questioned by Philadelphia police as part of a sexual assault investigation at an upscale hotel. Blatche was not charged.

He wrote about the incident on Twitter, saying, "Im ok and I didn't do anything jus was n the area when it happened," Blatche tweeted. He later took down the tweet.

Jrue Holiday scored 19 points and Spencer Hawes had 14 for the Sixers.

Timberwolves 108, Hawks 103

In Minneapolis, Nikola Pekovic had 25 points and a career-high 18 rebounds, and Andrei Kirilenko added 21 points to lead Minnesota over Atlanta.

Derrick Williams scored 17 points and Alexey Shved had 15 for the Timberwolves, who were missing coach Rick Adelman due to personal reasons. Terry Porter filled in and led the Wolves to their first victory over Atlanta since 2006, snapping an 11-game skid in the series.

Josh Smith had 21 points and 13 rebounds, and Al Horford had 19 points and 11 boards for the Hawks, who have lost three straight and four of their last five. They lost for the first time this year when Smith and Horford each get a double-double.

RG3 to have surgery on torn right knee ligament



WASHINGTON
(AP)—Robert Griffin III is having surgery Wednesday on a torn ligament in his right knee—

and to see if there's a second ligament that also needs to be repaired.

Baylor coach Art Briles confirmed to *USA Today* and The Associated Press on Tuesday night that the Washington Redskins rookie has a torn lateral collateral ligament. He said the surgery also will determine whether Griffin has damaged the ACL in that knee.

A person close to Griffin, speaking on condition of anonymity because the Redskins have not made an announcement, also confirmed the details surrounding Griffin's injury to the AP.

A torn LCL requires a rehabilitation period of several months, possibly extending into training camp and the start of next season. A torn ACL is a more severe injury, typically requiring nine to 12 months of recovery, although Minnesota Vikings running back Adrian Peterson make a remarkable return this season some eight months after tearing an ACL—and nearly broke the NFL's single-season rushing record.

Griffin tore his ACL in the same knee while playing for Baylor in the third game of the 2009 season and missed the rest of the year. He was injured on the opening drive against Northwestern State but kept playing until halftime.

Griffin came back to win the Heisman Trophy two years later, and Briles predicted a similar recovery this time.

"RG3 will be good as new, though. I know that!" Briles said in a text message to the AP.

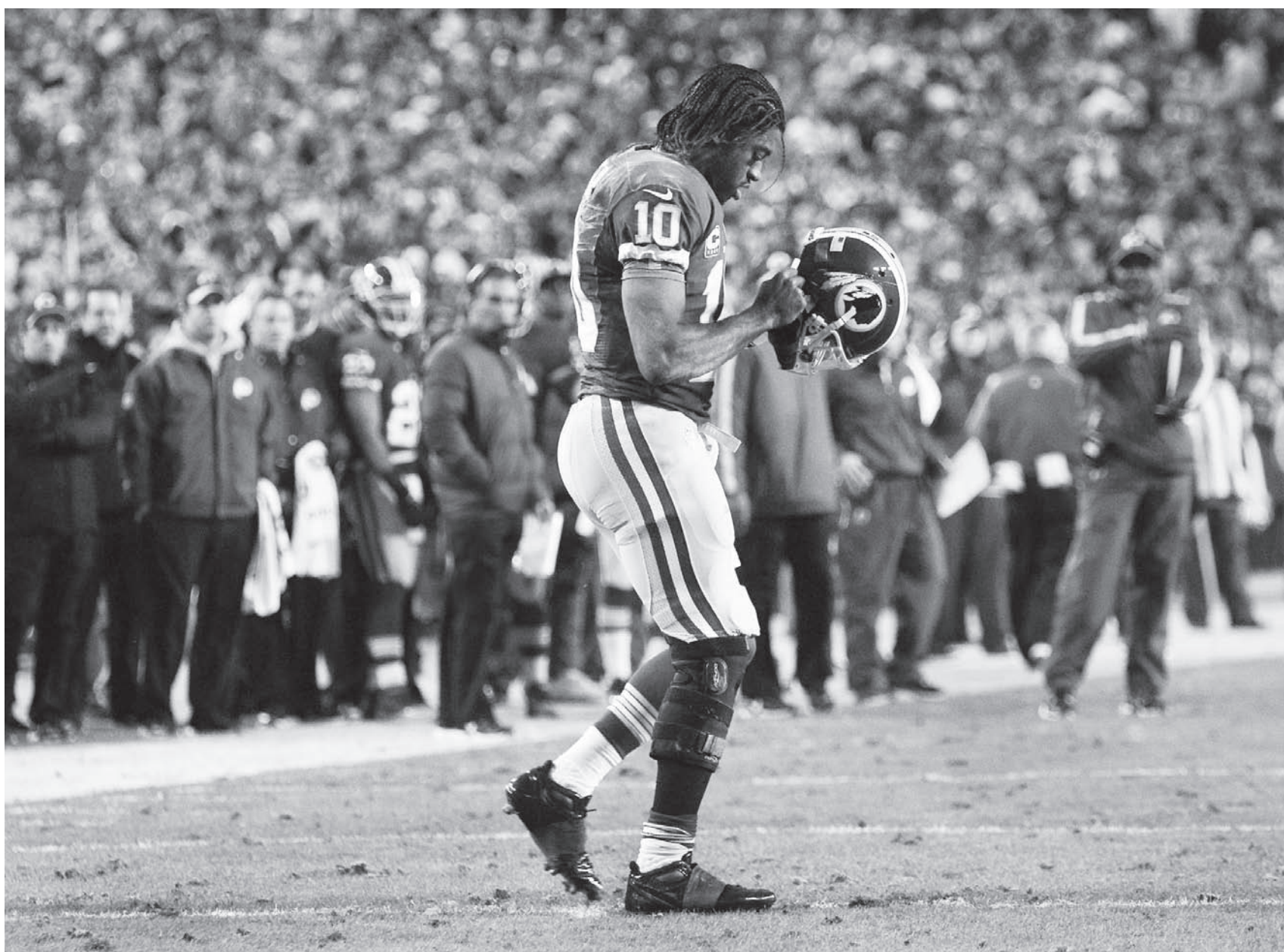
Griffin sprained the LCL last month against the Baltimore Ravens and missed one game. He returned wearing a bulky black brace for subsequent games and reinjured the knee at least twice in Sunday's playoff loss to the Seattle Seahawks, prompting a national debate over whether coach Mike Shanahan endangered his franchise player's career by not taking him out sooner.

The Redskins said an MRI taken after the game was inconclusive, so Griffin flew to Florida on Tuesday for a more detailed examination conducted by orthopedist James Andrews. Andrews will perform the surgery Wednesday.

Griffin, the No. 2 overall pick, was one of several rookie quarterbacks to make an instant impact on the league this season. He set the NFL record for best season passer rating by a rookie QB and led the Redskins to their first NFC East title in 13 years.

But Griffin also had to leave three games early due to injuries—two because of his knee and one because of a concussion—and missed a fourth altogether because of the knee. Shanahan repeatedly said Griffin had clearance from doctors to return to play, but the coach also said he trusted Griffin's own word when deciding that the rookie should continue during Sunday's game—even though Griffin was clearly struggling after reinjuring the knee in the first quarter.

Griffin remained in the game until the fourth quarter, when he hurt the knee again while fielding a bad shotgun snap.



In this Jan. 6, 2013, photo, Washington Redskins quarterback Robert Griffin III (10) returns to the huddle after hurting his right knee as he fell awkwardly while throwing an incomplete pass during the first quarter of their NFL wild card playoff football game against the Seattle Seahawks in Landover, Md. AP

Jaguars hire Falcons' Caldwell as general manager

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP)—The Jacksonville Jaguars have hired Atlanta director of player personnel David Caldwell as general manager, charging him with turning around one of the league's worst teams.

His first move will be deciding the fate of coach Mike Mularkey.

Owner Shad Khan tabbed the 38-year-old Caldwell on Tuesday, a day after a third interview. FoxSports.com first reported that the Jaguars had reached an agreement with Caldwell. A formal new conference is scheduled for Thursday afternoon.

"We got our man," Khan said in a statement. "I have a lot of faith in David Caldwell and I can assure our fans that the best days for the Jacksonville Jaguars are in front of us."

Added Caldwell, who chose the Jaguars over the New York Jets: "I am thrilled to accept the offer to become the next general manager of the Jacksonville Jaguars. There are no bad GM opportunities in the NFL, but to work on behalf of a dynamic owner in a rabid football city like Jacksonville is truly special. This is where I wanted to be and I could not be happier. I can't wait to get to Jacksonville and get started."

Caldwell's first task will be to make a decision on Mularkey, who went 2-14 in his first season in Jacksonville and has lost 20 of his last 23 games as a head coach.

Khan gave Mularkey's assistants permission to search for other jobs last week, an indication that he doesn't expect to retain Mularkey or his staff.

Then again, Caldwell and Mularkey have a relationship stemming from their time in Atlanta.

Before becoming the Falcons' director of player personnel in 2012, Caldwell spent four seasons as Atlanta's director of college scouting—the same four years Mularkey served as offensive coordinator. Caldwell replaced Les Snead, who was hired as St. Louis' general manager last offseason.

"He's a great guy, a great family man, does a good job," Mularkey said of Caldwell last month. "He had some experience in Indy before he got to Atlanta, and I thought he did a good job up there. ... I thought that (he would become a GM) when I worked with him, that he was heading in that direction."

Caldwell was part of an Atlanta front office that drafted quarterback Matt Ryan, linebackers Curtis Lofton and Sean Witherspoon, offensive tackle Sam Baker, safety William Moore, receiver Julio Jones and running back Jacquizz Rodgers.

Cowboys defensive coordinator Ryan not returning

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP)—Dallas defensive coordinator Rob Ryan was fired Tuesday after his injury-depleted unit struggled in a pair of season-ending losses that kept the Cowboys out of the playoffs for a third straight year.

Ryan was let go a day after running backs coach Skip Peete was fired, and less than a week after Cowboys owner Jerry Jones said things were going to get "uncomfortable" at team headquarters in nearby Irving.

"At this time, the decision has been made to move forward in a different direction philosophically on defense," Cowboys coach Jason Garrett said in a statement. "I have an immense amount of respect for Rob as a person and as a football coach."

Ryan spent two seasons with the Cowboys after he was fired two years into the same job in Cleveland. He didn't hide his displeasure over being let go by the Browns before the Cowboys played them this season. He struck a different tone Tuesday.

"I enjoyed my time here," Ryan told *The Dallas Morning News*. "I have no hard feelings. But it doesn't matter if I coach here or not. I will find another spot."

The Cowboys finished with four defensive starters on injured reserve, including both Sean Lee and Bruce Carter at inside linebacker—a critical position for Ryan's 3-4 scheme. A fifth

starter, nose tackle Jay Ratliff, missed all but six games with ankle and groin injuries. Nickel cornerback Orlando Scandrick was sidelined the last five games with a wrist injury.

Several Dallas players reacted with surprise on Twitter.

"It was a privilege to play under Coach Rob Ryan! One of the greatest," defensive end Jason Hatcher wrote. "Sad day. I'm hurting right now."

The Cowboys finished 14th in total defense this season under Ryan, the twin brother of New York Jets coach Rex Ryan, but couldn't stop the New Orleans passing game or the Washington rushing attack when they still controlled their playoff fate in the last two

weeks of the regular season.

Drew Brees threw for 446 yards and three touchdowns in a 34-31 overtime win for New Orleans. Dallas still had playoff hopes in the finale against Washington, but rookie Alfred Morris rushed for 200 yards despite quarterback Robert Griffin being limited by a right knee injury in the Redskins' 28-18 win.

The Cowboys were 19th in total defense in Ryan's first year but had one of the worst pass defenses in team history.

Following consecutive 8-8 seasons, Dallas is 128-128 since the start of 1997 season. The Cowboys have just one playoff win in that span.

SSS U12 Co-ed Christmas Futsal Tournament

PHOTOS By SAIPAN TRIBUNE



Fake Madrid's Clayton Izuka goes for a save during their title game against Astig Futsal in the Saipan Soccer School's U12 Co-ed Christmas Futsal Tournament last Saturday at the TSL Sports Complex.



Fake Madrid's Sunjoon Tenorio goes for a kick.



Spencer United defenders get ready for the direct kick awarded to Spencer United.



Spencer United's Joel Gonzales tries to break free from the defense of two Fake Madrid players.



Astig Futsal's Louie Calayag, right, tries to pass the ball to a teammate, as two Fake Madrid defenders chase him.



An Astig Futsal female striker kicks the ball from the sideline.



A Spencer United goalie catches the ball.



Fake Madrid's Logan Mister starts a play for his team.



A Fake Madrid player, left, tries to bring the ball down against two Astig Futsal defenders.



Fake Madrid (blue uniform) and Astig Futsal players battle for possession.



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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

28 THURSDAY, JANUARY 10, 2013

CNMI jr. players survive opener

Negahr Rastguiy and Tammy Ackerman lasted the opening round of the 2013 Victorian Junior Grasscourt Championships held yesterday at the Wodonga Tennis Centre in Victoria, Australia.



Both CNMI junior tennis players competed in the girls U14 doubles with different partners and advanced to the next round after posting contrasting wins. Rastguiy
See CNMI on Page 26



Negahr Rastguiy, seen here taking a break from a game in a local tournament late last year, is still in Australia and competing in her second tournament in the Land Down Under.

Kensuke aims for CNMI records in Australia

CNMI swimmer Kensuke Kimura will be racing in eight events in the 6th Australian Youth Olympic Festival and is aiming for at least two Commonwealth records in the five-day competition.

Hiro Kimura, Kensuke's father and coach of Tsunami Saipan Swimming Center, said his son will be swimming in two events per day at the Aquatics Centre of the Sydney Olympic Park. The younger Kimura will start his bid in the Olympic Festival, dubbed as the breeding ground of future Olympians, via the 200m freestyle and 100m backstroke races on Jan. 17. Kensuke's next events are 100m breaststroke and 400m individual medley, while on Day 4 and 5, he will be racing in the 400m free-



Kensuke Kimura, seen here racing in the 200m IM event during a local tournament last year, is leaving Saipan on Monday to compete in the 6th Australian Youth Olympic Festival in Sydney.

style and 200m backstroke and 200m IM and 50m freestyle, respectively.

The 16-year-old Kimura is one of the 12 swimmers selected to suit up for the Oceania Team and join this year's AYOF, which will feature 1,700 athletes from 30 nations and will have competitions in 17 sports.

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Aldan takes Prince of the Lanes crown



This time there was no upset.

M.J. Aldan finally lived up to expectations after beating Ryan Batac in the finals of the 2012 season-ending Saipan Bowling Association/Fiji Water Prince of the Lanes last Sunday at the Capital Bowling Center.

Last weekend's competition was Aldan's fourth straight time to make it to the stepladder finals of the youth tournament, but the victory was only his first. In 2009, he finished only third behind Raphael Zapanta and Leanne Yarobwemal. In



Aldan

2010 and 2011, he was heavily favored to take the titles after dominating the monthly roll-offs, however he fell to the upset axe of Marion McKenzie and newcomer John Taisacan.

In the 2012 finale last Sunday, Aldan flirted with another runner-up finish when he lost Game 1 of the finals, 143-179, before recovering in the deciding Game 2 with a 183-107 victory. Aldan took the 2012 title with a 40-pinfall win over Batac, 326-286.

The newly crowned champion earned a twice-to-beat advantage in the finals after top-

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Evolution, KFC/Taco Bell, Blazers cap wins in Holiday Hoops

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U13's Evolution, U15's Kentucky Fried Chicken/Taco Bell, and U21's Blazers topped their respective opponents in the latest round of the Rollers Basketball Club's 2012 Holiday Hoops youth basketball tournament Tuesday night at the Garapan Basketball Court.

Evolution outlasted the Super Stars, 22-17, in the curtain raiser after which the U15's inaugural pairing resulted in KFC/Taco Bell triumphing over Pogi, **See EVOLUTION on Page 26**



Pogi and Kentucky Fried Chicken/Taco Bell players scramble for the loose ball under the former's basket during their Rollers Basketball Club's Holiday Hoops U15 division game last Tuesday at the Garapan Basketball Court.